

Book and CD-ROM Reviews

Lameness in sheep

A Winter (2004). Published by The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Wiltshire SN8 2HR, UK. 160 pp Hardback (ISBN 1 86126 721 5). Price £16.99.

Lameness is without doubt one of the most challenging welfare issues the sheep farmer has to address and some form of the condition occurs in some sheep on most farms much of the time. It may cause acute pain for prolonged periods and chronic pain and distress for months or even years. Yet it is often neglected and is therefore one of the most common reasons for prosecutions for cruelty.

Many farmers spend hours of backbreaking work attempting to gain some degree of control over the many disease conditions that may cause sheep to become lame. Unfortunately, in many cases - often because of a lack of knowledge or expertise - these labours are frequently less than successful and occasionally even more damaging than the original condition. It is welcome, therefore, to see a text especially for those having to deal with the problem in their flocks, written by a veterinarian who is an acknowledged expert in the field and who has had experience of dealing with the problem in her own flock as well as in those of her clients.

Dr Winter points out the serious welfare issue that is lameness and explains why lame animals should be dealt with promptly and effectively to minimise the severity and duration of the pain involved. Sadly, because of economic pressures, many farmers do not consult their veterinary surgeon for advice on lameness so Dr Winter's advice on how to diagnose, treat and control lameness is therefore particularly helpful. She gives a detailed description of those diseases most likely to affect different age groups of sheep and points out the importance of appreciating that many conditions - such a footrot - are flock problems and not just problems of individual animals and must therefore be dealt with accordingly. The importance of flock bio-security and quarantine measures, so vital in keeping flocks free of infectious forms of lameness, is explained.

The most common infectious conditions such as scald and footrot and the relatively recently diagnosed condition of contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) are dealt with in some detail as befits their importance. Some of the less common but nevertheless distressing conditions that may affect individual sheep - such as pedal joint abscess and granuloma - have short chapters on their own. Dr Winter points out the serious and frequently permanent damage that may be done to sheep by the over-vigorous paring of feet - probably one of the most common and totally avoidable causes of lameness and illustrates techniques with a series of black & white and colour photographs. There is a chapter detailing methods of minimising lameness in the flock - prevention being better than cure. A useful flow chart provides an aid to diagnosis and another diagram shows the steps necessary when attempting to eradicate footrot from

those 'closed' flocks most likely to be successful in this very worthwhile venture.

The text is well illustrated with diagrams that are simple and helpful. Clinical conditions generally benefit from colour photography, which of course is expensive, but some of the colour plates in this book would have been adequate in black and white - such as those showing trimmed feet - and a number of the black and white photographs would have been better in colour or else omitted altogether as they are unhelpful. It is a pity that the pictures in the colour section - many of which are excellent - were not numbered and referred to in the text.

However, these are minor criticisms of what is an excellent and highly practical book that should be on the bookshelf of every sheep farmer, however young or however experienced.

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BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Endocrinology, 3rd edition

Edited by CT Mooney and ME Peterson (2004). Published by BSAVA Publications, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AB, UK. 248 pp Hardback (ISBN 0 905 214 722). Price £49.00 (Members), £75 (Non-members).

Despite sounding like notes on companion animal endocrinology for preclinical Veterinary students, this book is clearly very clinical in content and has the stated aims of having been written with vet students, nurses, general clinicians and specialists all in mind. It is the third edition in this BSAVA series and, since it follows its predecessor by six years, there is much new information available on diagnostics and therapeutics. It may seem a tall order to be able to satisfy the needs of such a diverse readership and also be bang up to date on technical detail, but the secret seems to be in the book's organisation. It contains some twenty - five chapters. In the first section, three chapters cover hormone assay theory - typical concentrations, conversions and generalised test procedures, while the next section has six chapters, which each recommend approaches to veterinary investigation of a common abnormality such as polyuria and hypokalaemia. In the next section each of the chapters explores a common endocrinopathy or syndrome associated with a particular hormone system, for example hypercorticism or hypothyroidism, while each of the chapters in the last section describes an uncommon endocrine disorder, such as dwarfism, or one of emerging importance. I found the book to be beautifully presented in an accessible, easily digested format with much of the key information and diagnostic processes highlighted separately from the main text. Despite a large list of contributing authors, which help give it an international appeal, the book has been well edited and there is good consistency of style between chapters. Thus,

each chapter proceeds in a similar order starting with basic anatomy and physiology of an endocrine system or for the particular variable under endocrine control. Next, there are clear and informative sections on pathophysiology; with accompanying case photographs, radiographs and diagrams, signalment and diagnostics, followed by discussion of therapeutics. On this note, consideration of certain tests and treatments not available in the UK add much interest. Throughout, the advice is clear, the diagnostic pathways are unambiguous and there is a strong emphasis on the many key differences between dogs and cats. If there is one fault, in my view, it concerns the omission of information on sourcing endocrine testing kits, consumables or specialist laboratory services. I find the lack of such information odd in view of the amount of reference detail given in the opening chapters. In reviewing this book for a journal dedicated to animal welfare it is pertinent to comment on welfare issues raised. While there is no specific section on welfare, most chapters have a section on prognosis, which, of course, gives apposite observations on the importance of prompt treatment and the likelihood of the patient regaining or maintaining a good quality of life, perhaps with maintenance therapy. In summary, I'm sure the book will find its way onto the bookshelves in many practices and its popularity will surely necessitate it being held in the restricted loan section of the Vet School library.

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Bioethics: An Introduction for the Biosciences

B Mepham (2005). Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK. 386 pp Paperback (ISBN 0 19 926715 4). Price £21.99.

Ben Mepham is Special Professor in Applied Bioethics and Director of the Centre for Applied Bioethics at the School of Biosciences, University of Nottingham. He turned to bioethics after working in physiology. He is now widely known for his work in applied ethics, including his development of 'the ethical matrix' which is now widely used as a valuable tool for analysing bioethical issues. He was also the first Executive Director of the Food Ethics Council.

Mepham's textbook *Bioethics: An Introduction for the Biosciences* is to be very warmly welcomed. It is written with great clarity, impressively up to date and covers a wide range of bioethical issues. It is written very much as a textbook and there may be some who don't greatly like that: we are told, for example, how to pronounce 'paradigm', as well as 'Mepham', and there are frequent succinct definitions and short summaries (eg of the difference between Popperian and Kuhnian thinking). However, I cannot imagine any undergraduate (and most postgraduates) not benefiting from it.

Each chapter starts with a list of objectives and ends with the main points, exercises, further reading, a list of useful websites and detailed references. As Mepham points out,

the book has been written specifically for students taking bioethics courses in UK universities, but I am confident that it will have a much wider readership than that.

The book is arranged in five parts, each containing three chapters. Part one is on the theoretical underpinnings of bioethics. There is a clear discussion on the nature of bioethics, on why bioethics has become such a growth area, on the origin of ethical norms, on theories of ethics and on a framework for ethical analysis. Here is my one minor objection: I wish Mepham had amended his ethical matrix so that it didn't have notions of well-being, autonomy and fairness applied to all and sundry, eg the biota.

Part two is on human futures. There is a welcome discussion on inequalities in wealth which leads into an exciting range of issues including biopiracy, Malthus, development policies and Aid agencies. There are then detailed treatments of birth control, infertility (including issues around the medicalisation of birth), reproductive technologies and embryo experimentation. The final chapter in part two looks at reproductive choices. This includes material on prenatal screening, the UK Biobank, stem cells and such issues as saviour siblings and designer babies.

Part three is on an area that is particularly close to Mepham's main area of expertise: animals (and Mepham carefully discusses speciesism). There are, in my judgement, balanced treatments of animal welfare and animal rights, and some fascinating material on psychological and sociological implications of the taking of animal life (Section 7.5.2) which will, I suspect, be new to many readers of *Animal Welfare* – it certainly was to me. There is a valuable section on the welfare costs for different farm animal species (including fish) followed by one on the use of animals in sport, entertainment and elsewhere (eg as companion animals and for non-farm work). Experiments on animals gets a chapter all to itself and this is followed by one on animals and modern biotechnology.

Part four concerns plants and the environment. The first generation of GM crops are thoroughly reviewed and the treatment, once again, is balanced and up to date. 'Dietary futures' also get a chapter to themselves with consideration given to such topics as nutritional standards in the UK, functional foods and Golden Rice. The final chapter in part four deals with environmental sustainability. Throughout the book Mepham has a somewhat crisp style, which I rather like. To give a flavour of it, here's a sentence from this chapter where Mepham is writing about environmental impact: "It is clear that different countries have different capacities to reduce the impact, namely: LDC by curbing population growth; DC by reducing affluence; and emerging economies, such as China, by use of less polluting technologies." This quote does, though, illustrate one very minor complaint, namely the author's fondness for abbreviations, some of them completely unnecessary – eg BrR for the Brundtland Report. The above quote is from page 289 but the reader would have had to have read and remembered the definitions of DC and LDC from page 70.