Problems Of The Southern Practitioner

A. H. Groth
Louisiana State College
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A. H. Groth, D.V.M., B.S., M.S.*

The veterinary practitioner in our southern states is confronted with a number of problems that are not found in other sections of the United States. One important reason for such differences is the climate which ranges from that comparable to the climate of the midwest to semi-tropical with an annual rainfall of sixty inches or more. Higher temperatures and heavy precipitation favor the development of spore forming bacteria and all forms of parasites. Another reason is the one crop system of agriculture that has predominated for many years. Livestock production has only recently become a serious part of the agricultural program, hence southern farmers as a whole are not “livestock-minded.” Breeding, feeding and management practices still leave much to be desired. There are of course notable exceptions, and outstanding flocks and herds are to be found in all of the southern states.

**Poor Pastures**

There is still a tendency to depend entirely too much on year round pastures, which, with few exceptions, do not exist. This results in a low level of nutrition during at least a part of the year and lowered resistance to parasites and diseases. The practitioner, when called to treat such animals, must not only combat that specific trouble, but also the underlying cause or causes as well. Improved pastures, grown on soil that is properly fertilized and drained are helping to insure not only adequate grazing, but a winter’s supply of hay as well. Judicious use of supplemental feeds and minerals also help to simplify the veterinarian’s problems.

Flies and mosquitoes, plus ticks and lice are external parasites that must be reckoned with in many areas. Equine encephalomyelitis outbreaks have occurred in the more poorly drained sections where insect population is heavy. The eastern strain of the virus was isolated from the brain of a horse in southwest Louisiana during 1944. Since the western strain previously existed in the area, veterinarians now use the bi-valent vaccine to effectively protect susceptible horses and mules.

Anaplasmosis of cattle is also a more serious problem where insect transmission is a greater possibility. The large biting flies (Tabanidae), the Gulf Coast ear tick, the brown dog tick, and mosquitoes all have been incriminated. Lay vaccination, especially against anthrax, and unclean surgery also play an important role in transmission of anaplasmosis. Lack of any specific therapeutic agent for anaplasmosis results in a wide variety of treatments being used, but practitioners are agreed that symptomatic treatment and good nursing are of utmost importance.

**Anthrax**

Anthrax is an annual threat, especially in the river bottoms and flat coastal plains regions. Veterinarians have an effective weapon of defense in the single injection spore vaccines produced by reputable biological laboratories. The policy of direct sales of anthrax spore vaccines to laymen, by some firms, has increased lay

vaccination. It has also increased the number of cases of vaccination anthrax in animals and accidentally caused cases in humans. Mules usually tolerate a spore vaccine of the same strength as used on cattle, but horses will not tolerate such a potent vaccine. Some practitioners in the sugar belt combine anthrax vaccination and internal parasite treatment of mules.

**Blackleg**

Blackleg must be considered in much the same light as anthrax. In larger herds under range and semi-range conditions blackleg vaccination is usually done at the same time as dehorning, castrating and branding. Much of the blackleg vaccination is by laymen.

Protective measures against screw worms must be taken during much of the year. Any fresh wound may be infested, but the application of Smear 62 is effective both as a preventive and in removing the larvae.

Tetanus is an ever present threat, especially in the heavy soil areas. Antitoxin is used extensively when an injury is noted, but very limited use is made of the toxoid. Its use is, however, increasing on more valuable animals.

**Bacillary Hemoglobinuria**

Bacillary hemoglobinuria (Red Water) occurs in limited areas near the coast of Louisiana and Texas. The disease was first noted following the importation of western cattle during the drought period of the 30's. Bi-annual vaccination with the bacterin prepared from *Clostridium hemolyticum* is necessary to prevent heavy losses.

Practically all of the more common nematodes thrive in the mild humid sections. Control measures must include proper nutrition and pasture rotation as well as correct medicinal treatment. Many farmers fail to recognize the possibility of irreparable damage to vital organs by the parasites and expect the veterinarian to perform a miracle by the administration of an anthelmintic. Phenothiazine and salt mixture is proving effective in aiding to control nematodes of sheep when used in conjunction with individual treatment. Cattle, however, do not consume enough of the mixture for effective results.

Liver flukes are another problem in flat poorly drained areas. These include much of the coastal plains and some of the river valleys. Condemnations of livers run high in slaughtered cattle produced in these sections. A heavy fluke infestation is often complicated by nematodes and lack of feed. Drenching in the spring and fall with hexachloroethane destroys the flukes and often saves the animal, but it does not of course, repair liver damage. This treatment may be combined with anthrax vaccination in the spring, thus saving an extra handling of the cattle.

**Mastitis**

Practitioners in dairy sections find mastitis to be their main problem. Establishing an effective program of control is often hindered by lack of intelligent and cooperative labor in the dairy. Improvement is being made in sanitation of lots and barns, and in feeding practices. Pure-bred and high grade cows of producing ability are being added to herds. This gives the owner more incentive to control mastitis and the veterinarian does get more cooperation. There is, however, a great tendency on the part of the dairyman to expect a miracle from udder infusions, no consideration being given to destruction of glandular tissue.

Dairy cattle of some sections seem to have considerable trouble from acetonemia. The occurrence is seasonal for most cases develop in the winter and early spring. During this period the quality and quantity of roughage are often deficient and grain feeding may be increased. Following recommended feeding practices reduces the number of cases, and increases milk production.

**Pork Production**

Pork production is not extensively practiced in most parts of the South—the exceptions are the peanut growing sections of Alabama and Georgia. Hog cholera is still the most important swine
disease. Frequently the virus lacks the potency of that found in the mid-west. This is probably the result of raising fewer hogs in a given area and allowing them to range in the unfenced woods. In some southern states, veterinarians prefer to do little if any swine practice and so there is much lay vaccination. Practitioners who do concern themselves with the building up of such a practice find that it fits nicely with their efforts to give reasonably complete veterinary service.

Swine Erysipelas

Swine erysipelas is rapidly becoming a problem of concern in some of the southern states. Breeding stock is often imported from other sections with little consideration for the health status of the herd or its origin. Some of the livestock sanitary officials are now permitting the use of vaccine with its use being restricted to graduate veterinarians.

Stomach, intestinal, lung and kidney worms are internal parasites of swine that must be combatted. Here again the veterinarian must frequently contend with deficiencies of proteins, minerals and vitamins. Enteric infections are encountered in herds raised under unsanitary conditions. Gradual adoption of the McLean County system of swine sanitation is aiding in disease and parasite control. Lice and fleas are frequent inhabitants of the hog houses and lots, and the former may cause extensive spread of swine pox. In DDT the veterinarian has an effective treatment for many of the external parasites of not only swine, but also for other animals.

Rabies

No consideration of the problems of the southern veterinarian would be complete without mentioning rabies. It is a problem of great importance from the public health standpoint and of some important economically. Stray dogs owned alike by white and colored, and wild animals maintain the source of the virus, that can be eliminated only by the combined efforts of the public health authorities, the governing bodies, and the veterinarians. In some counties the combined efforts of all interested and responsible parties has practically eliminated rabies.

The southern practitioner of veterinary medicine is not by any means without problems that frequently tax his skill and ingenuity. He can and often does occupy a position of importance in his community. If he is well grounded in animal and dairy husbandry, plus his training in veterinary medicine, he can render invaluable service to the growing livestock industry of the South.

Midsummer sunlight has a six-fold advantage over midwinter sunlight in concentration of ultraviolet rays having effects on human health, as measured by the National Bureau of Standards.—Sci.

Foods most likely to be responsible for food-poisoning outbreaks are moist, bland ones, such as cream-filled pastries, spaghetti, macaroni, turkey or chicken stuffing, gravies and creamed dishes of various sorts. Certain types of salads, ham which has undergone a tendering process and, occasionally, corned beef also may give trouble. Germs that cause food poisoning grow well in such foods unless kept at very hot or very cold temperatures.

Foods which are dry, highly acid, highly spiced or with high concentrations of salt are likely to be free from the food-poisoning menace since such foods do not support bacterial growth.—Sci. N. L.

By injection or mouth, synthetic folic acid, newest member of the Vitamin B complex group, successfully brings up the red-blood cell count and hemoglobin content in anemic persons, with definite improvement noted within a few days. Dr. Tom D. Spies, of Birmingham, Alabama, announced the new discovery of the first synthetic substance to give results in the treatment of anemia, though it is not claimed that it will act in every case as liver does. Folic acid is found in liver, kidney, and yeast.

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