Review by Gary Conboy

Essentials of Veterinary Parasitology is an attempt by the authors to provide a concise, readily accessible source of clinically oriented information on the most important veterinary parasites of domesticated animals. Only those parasites of wildlife that also infect livestock and companion animals are included for discussion, limiting the value of this book for those seeking information specifically on wildlife. The book is intended for use by veterinary students as a study aid and by veterinarians working in a traditional food production or companion animal practice as a reference source. For anyone involved in teaching in a veterinary school curriculum, the exercise of contemplating which specific parasites and what amount of information should be considered “essential” in the training of veterinarians is both useful and necessary, and in this respect I found the book thought provoking. In my experience in teaching, students tend to be overwhelmed by the sheer weight of numbers and the volume of information associated with the study of veterinary parasitology and would welcome a source offering just the “essentials” on this subject. The book is divided into chapters on basic concepts, diseases associated with specific parasites, diagnostic methodology, and principles of control. I think there would be a broad consensus of agreement among veterinary parasitologists with the majority of the parasites chosen for inclusion in this book. Perhaps a personal preference on my part, I would rather have seen the inclusion of some of the trematodes infecting companion animals (of which none are mentioned) instead of the sections on Balamuthia amoebic encephalitis and Rhinosporidiosis. For the most part, the text is clearly written, and the life cycle diagrams and many of the parasite images are well done, although in general, I would have liked to see more included. In some sections, brevity comes at the expense of necessary detail (e.g., the treatment for caval syndrome due to Dirofilaria immitis infection is given, but there is no mention of pathogenesis or diagnosis of the syndrome; the discussion on Isospora spp. is likely to mislead readers into thinking they are zoonotic parasites). Additionally, the information presented in the chapters on mange mites and lice is almost entirely from a food production animal practice perspective and would not serve the needs of a clinician in companion animal practice. The authors have done an admirable job of maintaining a worldwide perspective in most of the chapters; however, the North American reader will find the chapter on tick-borne diseases to be focused almost entirely on the situation in Europe and the United Kingdom. Particularly well done are the chapters on control. Provided the veterinary student or clinician is mindful that this book is not intended to be a complete encyclopedic treatise on the subject, he or she may find this book a helpful reference source or study aid, although on occasion further information will need to be sought elsewhere.

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