

Reindeer and reindeer diseases

Ren och rensjukdomar by Claes Rehbinder & Sven Nikander (in Swedish). Studentlitteratur. Lund 1999. 247 pp. ISBN 91-44-01138-5. Price SEK 450,-. Ordering address is <http://www.studentlitteratur.se>

Ren och rensjukdomar by *Claes Rehbinder* and *Sven Nikander* is the best and only handbook on reindeer diseases currently available. The authors are recognised authorities in the field of reindeer disease research, especially within pathology and parasitology. The expectations were therefore high.

The first appearance is somewhat disappointing; on the front cover there is a herd of reindeer in a blue mist; which suggests the cold arctic winter. However, at closer look, the photo is from a summer round up, so fading of other dyes probably caused the blue tint. Although the front cover did not impress, the photos inside are very good, both regarding their contents and the technical quality. Thanks are also due to the printer, from some rather underexposed originals the outcome is crisp.

Although the title of the book might suggest a more general presentation of reindeer, the text deals mostly with the field it was expected to, diseases of domesticated reindeer. There are now available several handbooks on the general biology of reindeer, both in the Scandinavian languages and in Finnish, so it is gladdening that the authors have concentrated in their special fields of expertise. The text is generally well balanced, but one problem is that the authors, when attempting to give practically valuable advice, according to my opinion, sometimes have tried too much. For example, in the table on page 222 they recommend antiparasitic treatment to reindeer even three times a year. This treatment regime is supported by studies on the occurrence of various parasites during different times of the year, and by small separated treatment studies, but the whole regime has apparently never been tested. It is still elsewhere commonly discussed if the currently standard early winter macrocyclic lactone treatment is economically feasible to reindeer owners, or per-

haps not. Therefore, I feel that the authors would better have had a more conservative approach than to recommend new antiparasitic treatment schedules.

The authors have been rather relaxed when referring to the work of others. The drawing by Hofmann (Figure 1.3) has been modified, but this will not necessarily become clear to the reader. The origin of the classical oestrid fly drawings (Figures 7.4 and 7.11) by A. and T. Ekblom, already used by A. M. Bergman in 1916, would definitely have been worth mentioning.

The list of references is based on logic probably not at all clear to the average reader. The references appear haphazardly selected, and the bibliographical citations do not have a uniform format.

There are many small but irritating errors, which could easily have been removed in case the authors had carefully read the proof prints. For example, the meaning of the figure (27.9) text has been changed thoroughly by mixing *curved knife* with *cork knife* and *stunning* with *evaluation*.

Many things could have been done better, and after minor changes the book could have been excellent. Therefore, it is delightful to hear about a planned English edition of the book. If the authors could use more time to carefully check details; the book could very well stand for a long time as the one and best book on reindeer diseases. The English translation would also make the book available to a new forum (although Swedish may well be the best language when thinking about the number of reindeer veterinarians and reindeer herders of the world). Everybody interested in reindeer diseases and capable to read Swedish is advised to obtain the book without delay!

Antti Oksanen