

Foreword

Finnish veterinarians have traditionally been interested in research on the reindeer; 6 reindeer dissertations were presented at the College of Veterinary Medicine in Helsinki during its 5 decades (now Faculty at the University of Helsinki). There may be several reasons for it. The semi-domesticated reindeer forms a unique and exciting link between agriculture and wildlife. Reindeer husbandry is an important source of livelihood in northern Finland, where the nature does not favour other forms of agriculture. In addition, it is relatively easy to increase the knowledge of the reindeer, which is not a well-known animal species in the world veterinary community.

The work on this thesis started in 1989 with a comparison of two methods of administration of ivermectin. Then, as now, veterinary parasitologists reported excellent efficacy of ivermectin from clinical trials in different animal species in all parts of the world, and that was exactly what I expected to find. Although the starting point was not very exciting, I soon learned to like the practical aspects of the research as we found out that it was not all the same how ivermectin was administered to reindeer. This work was carried out at the Kaamanen Experimental Reindeer Herd. This herd is perhaps the one most suitable for controlled herd trials anywhere. I highly appreciate the possibility to work in this unique herd.

This work has not been done according to a prearranged plan, one discovery opened a new question and thus led to the next step. The work is practical by nature, and for some people working in another field, the methods may seem outdated. However, faecal egg counting can still be considered the most useful diagnostic method in veterinary parasitology.