

To a great extent most method-driven books are similar in that they describe how to capture and restrain a particular species using a set of tools. This book does not describe restraint techniques in detail but peruses the underlying literature on how animals cope with different handling practices and transport. The chapters are well referenced and are useful sources of information. In some chapters interesting side issues are discussed, for example, there is a section on tail-docking in dairy cattle. The chapter on dogs for herding and guarding livestock, while interesting, does seem somewhat out of place in this book.

This book is about the common farm species in Europe and North America. The chapter on farmed deer shows that the book is forward looking but there is nothing on camels, llamas, alpacas, emu or ostriches; species which are being farmed in some parts of the world. Mind you, there is probably a very small literature on the handling or transport of these species which would make for small chapters. There is also no chapter on wildlife which, again, probably reflects the lack of scientific research into the handling and transport of these species.

This book is an essential textbook for anyone interested in farm animal and chicken welfare. It looks at two major factors in how management affects an animal's experience of life, namely interaction with humans and transport. Although the chapters are by different authors, they are all easily read and the editor is to be complimented on her thoroughness.

I have used the earlier editions of this book a lot, dipping into them for information on a wide range of topics and as sources of reference material. I recommend and will continue to recommend this book as a reference text to undergraduates writing essays on handling and transport and to post-graduate veterinarians undertaking professional development courses. If you are interested in farm animal and poultry welfare you must have this book on your shelf for easy access and use.

Kevin Stafford,

Massey University,

New Zealand

Veterinary Forensics: Animal Cruelty Investigations

MD Merck (2007). Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK. 368 pp Paperback (ISBN 978-0-8318-1501-5). £49.50.

The challenge of a veterinary forensic case brings out the amateur detective in many of us. A book which offers detailed and clear direction on crime scene investigations, forensic testing and forensic pathology findings, as well as guidance on handling court evidence would seem the ideal birthday present for the budding Miss Marple or Dr Watson. Unfortunately, *Veterinary Forensics: Animal Cruelty Investigation* by Dr Merck is not that book. It is rather a pastiche of the well-known human pathology book, *Forensic Pathology* written by Di Maio and Di Maio and, in a sense, it is a dangerous book because the author describes with undue certainty, pathological findings for animals which are found in humans but rarely if at all in animals.

Take, for example, 'yoking' which in veterinary terms is the linking of draft animals by a wooden bar across the neck to hold them together. In *Veterinary Forensics*, yoking apparently refers to the compression of the neck by the forearm usually from behind the victim and, because the forearm is a broad, soft object, the author claims there may be little or no external damage to the neck although damage to internal neck structures is said to be variable but may include fracture of the larynx or hyoid. Not surprisingly there are no veterinary references to support these findings for this implausible method of animal assault.

The book is divided into 14 chapters and 27 very useful appendices which include charts of body condition scores, histology checklists and forensic entomology data forms. There are 33 illustrations of poor quality in black and white throughout the text and then the same pictures are reproduced in a colour section. Colour does not enhance the quality of the photographs in any way and it must beg the question: was the author short of illustrations to start with?

The first four chapters deal with the role of the veterinary surgeon within the legal system and crime scene investigations. Although the book is aimed at the US market, the advice in general about chain of evidence is universal and sound. The next eight chapters follow the layout of the Di Maio's book and deal with patterns of injury caused by non-penetrating forces, penetrating injuries, burns, gunshot wounds, asphyxia and drowning, poisoning, neglect and sexual assault. The last 2 chapters discuss animal fighting and the determination of time of death.

In the reviewer's opinion there are surprisingly few pathological or legal references quoted in the book, apart from other general veterinary texts and the Di Maio's book. In the section on drowning there is no reference to the classic (if horrific) experiments carried out in the US in 1950s where live dogs were drowned, under controlled conditions, in either fresh or saltwater. Although we may find these experiments distasteful they are recognised as central to the understanding of the pathophysiology of drowning. The chapter on gunshot injuries made no reference at all to hunting and does not describe the need to use radiology to assess the injuries in animals and birds. The section on ritualistic crime seems a little naïve in mixing the practices of a recognised religion, the Church of Lucumi (Santería), with cults such as Satanism or Vampirism. The chapter on sexual assault in animals is extremely weak. It is quite wrong, in my view, to link this crime with sexual abuse in children and to ascribe specific pathologies such as vaginal prolapse in the spayed bitch as being highly suggestive of sexual assault when there is no documented evidence for this in the literature.

For the purposes of justice and animal welfare we need to have an understanding of forensic pathology. This book will not satisfy this need and will cause confusion. The novice in the field would do better to read either *Forensic Pathology* by Di Maio and Di Maio or better still Bernard Knight's classic text on human forensic pathology.

H Thompson,

Veterinary School,

Glasgow, UK