

***Equine Breeding Management and Artificial Insemination***

Edited by J C Samper (2000). W B Saunders: Philadelphia. 300pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, The Curtis Center, Independence Square West, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106, USA (ISBN 0721670121). Price US\$55.00.

This hardback book written by 17 different authors and edited by Dr Samper comprises approximately 300 pages arranged into 18 chapters each with good quality black and white figures and a short reference list. A comprehensive index allows rapid access to the information within the different chapters.

The book examines in detail the anatomy, physiology, behaviour and breeding management of stallions, followed by semen collection and evaluation, artificial insemination and transmission of disease in semen. The subsequent chapters are devoted to the anatomy of the mare, oestrous synchronization, artificial insemination and breeding management. The book is completed by chapters on the problem mare, embryo transfer, problems of the pregnant mare, reproductive efficiency and reproductive technology.

Much of the information in this textbook is aimed at a discussion of breeding management and how this can influence fertility. For example, information on stallion sexual behaviour and day-to-day management of the stallion at stud is presented in a very practically oriented manner. As such, much of the information is suitable for the knowledgeable stud manager, although much information is very relevant to the veterinary surgeon in clinical practice. Good overviews are presented of clinical reproductive management including preparation of semen for transportation, insemination of the mare, and breeding management of the problem mare and of the mare during pregnancy.

The final chapter entitled *Future Equine Reproductive Technologies* provides an excellent overview of the role and potential development of breeding technologies in equine reproduction.

Overall, the book is well written and is presented in a useable format that makes it a worthwhile addition to the practice library.

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***Companion Animal and Veterinary Nursing***

Proceedings of the 75th Jubilee NZVA Conference (Companion Animal Session and Veterinary Nursing Session) held 29 June–2 July 1998, Rotorua, New Zealand. Published by Veterinary Continuing Education, Massey University, New Zealand (ISSN 01129643).

This publication reports the proceedings of a conference which does not appear to have had a clear theme. The majority of the papers (17 of 21) are concerned with various aspects of companion animal behaviour. Two papers relate to communication with people and one, on advances in veterinary nursing and veterinary nursing training, considers how the communicative, well-trained nurse can be responsible for various aspects of increasing the practice profile (and profit). Whilst these could have been linked to the behaviour modification contributions, client compliance and motivation being crucial to success in resolving behaviour problems, this was not the case. The final paper, on equine limb fractures, is so out of context that it appears to have been included merely as a token gesture to those of the nursing profession who either were not working with small animals and/or had

no interest in behaviour. The overall impression, then, is one of a lack of cohesion. Personally, I feel that a better publication would have resulted from adherence to a single theme, which could have included papers on equine behaviour and behaviour problems.

Having said that, much of the content will prove of interest, if occasionally causing some puzzled frowns. The text is littered with errors that have missed the proof-reader's eye. Some of these errors mean that the sentence requires deciphering, whilst others make grammatical sense but do not necessarily say what, I presume, the author actually meant. My favourite in this latter category concerns the introduction (or re-introduction) of two cats. It is advised that the cats are put in separate cages 'at opposite ends of the room and are then fed. This should create a positive association. If now hissing or spitting occurs the cages are gradually brought closer and closer to each other over a period of days and meals'. I am quite sure that the author meant that the cages should only be brought together if NO hissing or spitting occurs. Accuracy and clarity of the text is of great importance, particularly given that much of the information in this publication is concerned with practical aspects of the recognition of behaviour problems and means for their prevention/resolution.

Karen Overall and Kersti Seksel contributed two thirds of the papers. These cover a wide range of topics including diagnostic methodology, normal behavioural development of the dog and cat, anxiety, aggressive and obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCDs) in dogs and cats. (There is some controversy in the field about the classification of aggressive behaviour and use of terminology such as OCD, but that particular debate is not the subject of this review.) The interest is in the breadth rather than the depth of the papers. Overall freely admits that many of her notes are adapted from her book *Clinical Behavioural Medicine for Small Animals*, and the publication may therefore prove to be a bit of a disappointment if you have already read her book.

It is always difficult to judge the audience at such conferences; each participant will have different levels of knowledge and experience. However, I did feel that the contributions jumped from introductory to quite advanced levels and back again in a seemingly random fashion. This may have been intentional to reflect the perceived mixed audience. Some progression from understanding normal behaviour to looking at different aspects of problem behaviour was attempted by Overall and Seksel, but the jumps in level made reading the proceedings feel less than coherent. This does not mean that they are not worth the read, rather that readers should be open-minded in their expectation.

There were two papers dealing with aspects of human behaviour. The first concerned interpersonal stress and the second communication skills. These were not consecutive in the text and would have benefited from both proximity to, and a clear link with, the predominant theme of behaviour therapy. Having said that, both papers covered a range of topics including non-verbal communication and a brief introduction to transactional analysis, which may engender some further interest in the important areas of team-working, stress reduction and improving communications.

The contribution by Kevin Stafford entitled *Canine and Feline Behaviour – Impact on Society* made a refreshing contrast in its portrayal of the other side of the pet ownership coin. Stafford considers the pros and cons of pet ownership in the wider context, for society as a whole, rather than for the individual owner. His picture is not particularly rosy and reflects concerns that have been raised in many quarters and which are already embedded, or being seriously considered, in local and national legislation throughout the western world. However, not all is doom and gloom for those who think that pet ownership is a privilege which society would do well to maintain. Stafford quite clearly sees the veterinary profession

as having a major role to play if society's tolerance of cat and dog ownership is to continue. For, as he says, '*the concept of producing a socially acceptable dog (Canine Good Citizen) is important and is more significant to the long term survival of this (veterinary) profession than all the fancy orthopaedic surgery and internal medicine combined*'. Whilst I agree totally with his sentiment, behaviour is a multi-disciplinary subject and the veterinary profession must work closely with other professionals, both in the animal and human fields. Only by so doing can pet ownership continue to flourish, be beneficial to the individual and be perceived at least neutrally, if not positively, by society.

It is perhaps a truism that proceedings are never as good as having been there and heard the paper. What is written is rarely a completely accurate report of what was said, or what was clarified or extended by visual aids, or in the discussion. However, the text should contain the essence of the paper in such a way that the reader who was not present easily understands it. Overall, I think this publication meets that objective, and the excellent referencing will permit the reader to take particular interests further.

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***Conservation and Management of Marine Mammals***

Edited by J Twiss Jr & R Reeves (1999). Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington. 471pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, 470 l'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7100, Washington, DC 20560, USA (ISBN 1560987782). Price US\$60.00.

This textbook provides a wide-ranging insight into the complex and diverse scientific, economic, social and political considerations that constitute the field of marine mammal conservation. Within this volume, the history of marine mammal conservation is reviewed alongside other topics ranging from current status to implications of future national and international legislation, ecosystem management, and interactions between marine mammals and fisheries. The controversial arguments for and against maintaining marine mammals in captivity are also informatively discussed, highlighting the inertia within current scientific methodology to definitively resolve such important welfare issues. A detailed, if perhaps slightly selective, discussion of marine mammal die-offs also provides a broad overview of the potential causes of, and problems inherent within, the investigation of marine mammal mass mortalities. The inclusion of well-written contributions on the contemporary whaling debate and the evolution of public attitudes towards marine mammals is particularly welcome alongside chapters dealing with specific conservation efforts directed at particular species. The editors sensibly conclude that effective marine mammal conservation necessitates a heavy reliance on sound science and a fundamental understanding of ecological relationships, together with the interdisciplinary cooperation of scientists, affected communities and nongovernmental organizations. Ultimately, *Conservation and Management of Marine Mammals* should serve as a useful and informative source of reference for scientists, students and policymakers alike who share a common interest in understanding the complex nature of marine mammal conservation.

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