

Royal Veterinary College, for identifying the source and date of this account.

March 30th, 1967.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN E. COX.

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piroplasms of wild animals in Africa and it is to be hoped that more work will be done on these interesting parasites, some of which do play a part in diseases of domestic animals.

April 8th, 1967.

Yours faithfully,

D. W. BROCKLESBY.

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Cambs.

A *Babesia* Species of the Black Rhinoceros

Sir,—The paper by G. M. Mugeru and J. G. Wandera, "Degenerative Polymyopathies in East African Domestic and Wild Animals" (*Vet. Rec.* 80, 410), is interesting to me for two reasons. Firstly it confirms but ignores earlier work, carried out in the same department, which was first reported in 1964 by Jarrett *et al.* Secondly, the authors state that one of the rhinos in their series died due to babesiasis: I recall seeing *Babesia* parasites in blood films from sick rhinoceros from time to time in Kenya but I was never convinced that these organisms were the cause of the illness. Piroplasms are often seen in blood smears from wild animals but unless they are present in very large numbers it is dangerous to assume that they are pathogenic.

The attached figure was drawn some years ago and illustrates the general morphology of a *Babesia* species found in a black rhinoceros captured in the Tsavo Park during a period of severe drought. The parasite was mentioned in a Table published by Brocklesby and Vidler (1965) but was not illustrated. It is clear that the *Babesia*, which was present in very small numbers, is a large pleomorphic organism with typical pyriform bodies and many bizarre amoeboid forms: the scale on the figure is 10 μ .



Like most animals that harbour piroplasms the rhino plays host to at least two species. One of these is the large form illustrated and the other is a small piroplasm that may be a *Nuttallia* or a *Theileria* species. Very little is known about the

References

- BROCKLESBY, D. W., & VIDLER, B. O. (1965). *E. Afr. Wildl. J.* 3, 120.
JARRETT, W. F. H., JENNINGS, F. W., MURRAY, M., & HARTHOORN, A. M. (1964). *Ibid.* 2, 158.

Methods of Testing Anthelmintics

Sir,—Mr. J. F. Michel's letter published in your issue of March 11th advocates, very rightly, the more extensive testing of anthelmintics.

However, as techniques become increasingly complicated it becomes more and more difficult for the practising veterinary surgeon (and virtually impossible for the farmer) to interpret the results. Thus we reach the unfortunate position where papers are published and are seriously challenged by other workers, but, nevertheless, are used subsequently for publicity purposes.

In South Africa the public is protected by the Fertilisers, Farm Feeds and Remedies Act of 1947. Under this Act all veterinary remedies must be registered, and the manufacturer is required to supply the Registering Officer with, *inter alia*, the claims made for the remedy, and, in the case of anthelmintics, full protocols of experimental work carried out locally demonstrating its efficiency.

This must be performed locally to standards laid down by the Director of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Laboratories (the equivalent of the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge) by a veterinarian approved by him and who may be required to take a special course in helminthological techniques at Onderstepoort.

The efficacy of an anthelmintic against mature and immature worms respectively may only be claimed in defined terms—*viz.* 80 to 100 per cent. as "Highly Effective" and 60 to 80 per cent. as "Effective."

Where claims are made for the safety of the product, this may only be expressed in terms of multiples of the effective dose and loose expressions, such as "very safe," are not allowed.

Similarly detailed local work will be required from this year for intramammary preparations and although overseas evidence is at present accepted for other remedies, it can only be a question of time before all are included.

The Veterinary Products Safety Precautions Scheme is a step in the right direction in that it protects the consumer against toxicity hazards. I submit that it should be extended to protect him against other risks!

April 7th, 1967.

Yours faithfully,

W. T. HARROW.

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