

Foreword

This special issue of Veterinary Research is dedicated to important diseases of horses. Horses are usually considered as a minor species although they represent an important source of income for the economy of agriculture. Moreover, the international dimension of the equine industry is really a specificity of this species: competitive horses travel around the world and as far as disease control is concerned, this aspect must be taken into account.

These articles present overviews on major equine infectious diseases. Three main aspects emerge from the different topics presented in this special issue:

- notifiable diseases that concern the most economically penalising diseases such as equine infectious anaemia, African Horse Sickness or equine influenza. They only affect equidae;
- diseases that are not legislated but that are of particular concern to equine professionals, due to their individual impact on horse health and performances, such as rhodococcosis, helminthosis, strangles...;
- a special mention to West Nile disease, which should not be neglected because of its recent spectacular extension in America and its increasing importance in public health;
- and finally, general aspects regarding vaccines, which illustrate the considerable progress in the knowledge on both the technology and molecular biology of equine infectious agents.

A tribute must be paid to the editors-in-chief of Veterinary Research for taking the initiative of publishing this special issue on equine infectious diseases of horses. Such an editorial choice is uncommon because the scientific specialised community involved in this research field is not as wide as for other animal species. We give special thanks to Professor J.L. Cadoré (Veterinary School in Lyon, France) for his contribution. Of course, this special issue would not have seen the light without the large contribution of all authors and colleagues. Unfortunately and for practical reasons, some topics such as herpes viruses infections, babesiosis, leptospirosis and equine arteritis were not included in this issue. This lack illustrates the need for a second issue on equines!

Nevertheless, we hope that the reader will find what he needs to update his knowledge in the field of infectious diseases of horses, that he will find information for its own centre of interest and that this issue will be considered as a reference in this area.

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