

situation would be exactly analogous to the administration of narcotics by both human nurses or nurse-practitioners or veterinary technicians, all under the direct supervision of the practitioner.

Such a scheme may be a pipe dream, and has one disadvantage – it would require government agencies to further expand their employee enrolment (although it might even be achieved at the expense of taking on more clerical staff!). Professor Northcote-Parkinson might concur!

Yours faithfully,

J. C. HAIGH, B.V.M.S., M.R.C.V.S.

Associate Professor

(Wildlife & Zoo Animal Medicine)

Department of Veterinary Clinical Studies

Western College of Veterinary

Medicine

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0

Brucellosis and Wildlife

Dear Sir:

I thought the following might be of interest to some of your readers.

During our brucellosis eradication scheme we are often criticized by ranchers who feel that we are wasting our time slaughtering reactor range cattle when remaining cattle, during the range season, then mix with certain species of wildlife, which might also be infected with brucellosis. The implication being, of course, that the wildlife (moose, elk, caribou, etc.) then reinfect the cattle, and the disease becomes impossible to eradicate.

To determine if there was any possibility of this happening, I approached Mr. Ken Child, Biologist for the B. C. Fish and Wildlife Department here in Prince George, and together we devised a scheme whereby, with the cooperation of local hunters, we could obtain blood samples from the wildlife in this area.

We managed during November and December of 1977 to obtain blood samples from 60 mature cow moose (1½ – 17 years of age). Unfortunately 18 samples were badly hemolysed due to the extreme temperatures experienced at the time of collection (around –30°C), and the inexperience of the hunters in handling blood specimens.

The remaining 42 samples were subjects to the Brewers Card Test for brucellosis and it was interesting that no reactors were found. Several of

the moose tested were shot in areas where the cattle population had been quite heavily infected with brucellosis over the last few years. Several of the herds from those areas had, in fact, been depopulated due to the high incidence of brucellosis within them.

With regard to the eradication of brucellosis from this area the results obtained from this modest study were encouraging. Even if reactors in the moose had been found, we still do not know if brucellosis causes abortion in this species, and thus we do not know how important moose are in the spread of the disease. However, in this study these questions did not arise, since none of the moose in fact reacted.

We hope to expand this study in the future to cover a greater number of moose, and also other species, in particular elk and caribou.

In the meantime, our results with the moose sera suggest that perhaps even in areas where there is considerable intermixing between cattle and wild ruminants, this does not pose a problem in the eradication of brucellosis and that we should continue with our brucellosis eradication program, at least until we obtain evidence to the contrary.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL HUDSON

District Veterinarian

Health of Animals Branch

Agriculture Canada

Prince George, British Columbia

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