

7. Summary

Economically significant diseases of cattle in the former GDR - causes and control.

A contribution on the history of diseases.

This study is a review of the development of economically significant diseases of cattle within the territory of the former German Democratic Republic from 1946 to 1989. The available literature was screened and evaluated according to certain time periods. These time periods were based on the development of GDR-agriculture, which is briefly summarized.

The state of animal health in live stock cattle changed significantly during the course of the study period. In the beginning epidemics and venereal diseases were the most important cattle diseases, whereas towards the end, non-infectious diseases, particularly nutritional disorders, and multifactorial infectious diseases took this place. Bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, trichomoniasis, vibriosis and warble fly infestation were eradicated in the GDR from 1946 to 1989. A significant relationship can be established between the development of agriculture and the main foci of diseases. Freestall housing, the foundation of large-scale live stock enterprises and industrialized cattle production caused specific animal health problems.

Control of economically significant cattle diseases in the GDR was performed by an extensive public veterinary service under central government guidance and coordination. The efficiency of this system was high, especially in controlling epidemics, but it was restricted to the limited economic capacities of the GDR. The control of animal epidemics and parasitoses was mainly performed in an administrative manner. Area sanitation programmes were successfully applied for tuberculosis, brucellosis, warble fly infestation, mastitis agalactiae and leucosis. It was shown, that set-backs in controlling animal epidemics were often caused by uncertainties in diagnostic measures. To supervise the herd health situation relative to fertility and metabolic herd health, specific procedures were developed and applied in large live stock farms. The extensive scientific preparatory works on this matter as well as basic veterinary and epidemic hygienic demands, could and should be used in a prophylactically orientated veterinary care of cattle enterprises.