

9. Summary

Swine fever – contribution to the history of animal diseases

The history of swine diseases and their control, particularly that of classical swine fever, is described from the first recordings to the time of elucidation of the etiology of the classical swine fever virus at the beginning of the 20 th century.

The work is subdivided according to the historical epochs. For a better understanding of the listed events the political-territorial, economic, scientific, medical and veterinary conditions of the respective epochs are described in greater detail.

In the scarce antique and medieval recordings little information can be found on swine diseases and their treatment. In addition, the few recordings from these epochs leave a lot of room for speculation. In contrast, the informational value of the literary sources increases significantly in modern times. From this time on efforts are made to provide an extensive overview of the occurrence of and the knowledge on the most important diseases known. In addition, a great diversity of theories on the pathogenesis and on the nature of diseases as well as general and specific therapeutic and prophylactical measures developed over the years are described.

Starting with the first cases documented it is tried to reconstruct the occurrence and spread of CSF as well as the occurrence of possible earlier cases and early therapeutic attempts. A diversity of theories on the origins of the disease is discussed. Furthermore, the work shows the important process of differentiating CSF from other diseases. The elucidation of the nature of the virus by de Schweinitz and Dorset at the beginning of the 20 th century is described in greater detail. In addition, the ground-breaking works of Loeffler are discussed, whose discovery of the causative agent of foot-and-mouth disease in 1898 marked the birth of the science of virology.

Attempts to control the disease – which were based on wrong assumption on the etiology of the virus and therefore largely remained unsuccessful – basically concentrated on general and veterinary hygienic, serological and medicinal measures. The application of veterinary hygienic measures, which was favoured by various scientists already at an early stage, did not lead to the expected positive effects, which can be explained by the fact that the measures were not coordinated at a supra-regional level. New impulses for immune prophylaxis and therapy as well as for the veterinary hygienic handling of the disease first came from the elucidation of the etiology of the virus.

Finally, the present situation as well as present and future problems of CSF control are discussed.