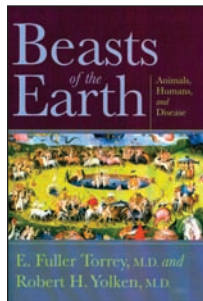


Book Reviews: For Your Library

Beasts of the Earth: Animals, Humans, and Disease

Reviewed by Jim Wright, DVM, PhD



Beasts of the Earth: Animals, Humans, and Disease provides a unique perspective on transmission of zoonotic diseases from domestic and other animals to humans. The early relationship between microbes and humans is reviewed as well as mechanisms of transmission of diseases from domestic and other animals to humans. The concept of heirloom infections or those passed from 1 species to another as

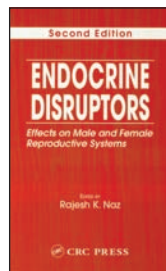
the latter species evolves is also discussed. The book addresses changes in zoonoses as human societies evolved from those primarily of hunters to those primarily of farmers. The influence of population density in villages is reviewed. The role of trade on disease transmission and the transmission of disease from pets are covered. Chapters on foodborne illness and illnesses associated with the modern food chain are especially interesting, as is the chapter on modern plagues and escapes of zoonotic disease agents from their niche boundaries.

Two errors on transmission of zoonoses are evident in the first chapter but do not detract substantially from the book. The authors state that eastern equine encephalomyelitis is transmitted from horses to humans by mosquitoes and that borreliosis (Lyme) disease is spread from deer to other animals by ticks. Horses are essentially a dead-end host for eastern equine encephalomyelitis, and wild mice are the reservoir for the disease agent that causes borreliosis, whereas deer are important primarily as a food source for the tick vector. This book would be especially appropriate for first-year veterinary students and medical students.—By E. Fuller Torrey and Robert H. Yolken. 191 pages; not illustrated. Rutgers University Press, 100 Joyce Kilmer Ave, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8099. ISBN 0-8135-3571-9. 2005. Price \$23.95.

Endocrine Disruptors: Effects on Male and Female Reproductive Systems (2nd edition)

Reviewed by Karine M. Onclin, DVM, PhD

A few years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency began mapping out a vast program (per congressional edict) to evaluate whether synthetic chemicals can disrupt hormones in humans and animals. These hormone or endocrine disruptors, even at incred-



ibly tiny concentrations, can interfere with reproduction, induce cancer, and cause birth defects and immune problems. Endocrine disruptors are actually a major societal concern among the general public and within the scientific community. The second edition of *Endocrine Disruptors: Effects on Male and Female Reproductive Systems* fills the gap between public concern and

knowledge and the technical data published in the scientific literature.

Scientific evidence is covered in detail and illustrated with many drawings and tables (but only a few pictures). The book is primarily addressed to lecturers who already have an extensive knowledge of reproduction, endocrinology, and the toxic effects of chemicals on the reproductive system. However, the detailed introductions of every chapter make this book understandable to interested members of the lay public who can afford this relatively expensive book. A great addition to the book would have been an index and glossary of all the chemicals reviewed; their nature, source, origin, occurrence, and form in the environment; and their potential developmental or toxic effects on the reproductive system, which would have sometimes made the information easier to understand.

The structure for this second edition is similar to that of the first edition. The book is divided into 2 sections that cover female and male aspects. The substantially revised and updated former chapters plus a new chapter develop the actual knowledge on the toxic effects of endocrine disruptors on fetal and embryonic mammalian cells.

This is an important book for scientists, students, and members of the lay audience who are interested in understanding the role of endocrine disruptors in the constantly observed modification of fertility and the increase of environmentally related reproductive diseases. I regret that it only focuses on the role of organic compounds, whereas the role of metals and their effects on the ovaries, testes, uterus, and neuroendocrine system, among others, have not been included (only data on the prostate are provided).

This book summarizes and critically evaluates the scientific literature on one of the major challenging topics. It is definitely a great source of reference information and a highly valuable addition to update our knowledge of these agents and their sometimes-controversial effects on reproductive function in human and other animal populations.—By Rajesh K. Naz. 444 pages; illustrated. CRC Press, 2000 NW Corporate Blvd, Boca Raton, FL 33431. ISBN 0-8493-2281-2. 2005. Price \$159.95.