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SHORT COMMUNICATION

SEASONAL INCIDENCE OF AMPHISTOMES IN CATTLE IN MEGHALAYA (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

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A total of 960 cattle (*Bos indicus* L.), examined during the period February, 1986 to January, 1987, revealed 54.7% overall rate of infection of adult amphistomes throughout the year with two peak periods of prevalence, one between June and September and other between January and February.

Introduction

Spectrum of amphistomes among ruminant hosts has been carried out recently by several workers in India (Hafeez & Rao, 1980; Tandon & Sharma, 1981; Roy and Tandon, 1989a; 1991). However, observations on the seasonal fluctuations of gastro-intestinal trematodes exclusively in cattle are very much limited. The present communication deals with the seasonal incidence of amphistomes in cattle slaughtered in Shillong.

Materials and Methods

The slaughtered cattle examined were indigenous stock including some from the neighbouring state of Assam. However, the emphasis was given to examine the indigenous stock only. Eighty cattle were autopsied regularly at monthly interval from different slaughter houses in and around Shillong from February, 1986 to January, 1987. The gastrointestinal tract of all the 960 animals was examined visually to recover the flukes. Species-wise differentiation of the various amphistomid flukes was not attempted because a group of several species were found in the same host in this area where 15 species of amphistomes have elsewhere been reported (Roy and Tandon, 1991).

Results and Discussion

Of the total 960 cattle examined, 525 (54.7%) were found to carry amphistome flukes. The infection occurred throughout the year with not much fluctuation in the seasonal occurrence, though a slight rise in the prevalence during summer and early autumn (June to September) and in the following winter (January to February) was evident (Table).

A considerable high prevalence of amphistome infection as recovered herein and also infection due to *Fasciola gigantica*, *Eurytrema pancreaticum* (Roy & Tandon, 1989b; 1991) reflect upon the general health condition of the livestock animals in the region. Although a part of the slaughtered cattle were from the adjoining state, yet the infected animals along with the occurrence of required intermediate molluscan hosts in the region (Rajkhowa, 1982) become a potential source of infection to the indigenous stock of cattle as well as other ruminants.

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Table—Seasonal occurrenee of gastrointestinal amphistomes among cattle (n=960) in Meghalaya,

Months	1986 F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	1987 J	Total
No. infected	54*	38	37	42	50	49	61	48	33	28	36	49	525
% infected	67.5	47.5	46.5	52.5	62.5	61.2	76.2	60.0	41.2	35.0	45.0	61.2	54.7

*80 cattle were examined in each month.