BOOKS RECEIVED

Recent Advances in Mycoplasmaology

Edited by G. STANEK, G. H. CASSELL, J. G. TULLY and R. F. WHITCOMB. 1990. Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, New York. Pp 962. DM 378.

This large and well-produced hard-cover volume represents the Proceedings of the 7th biennial Congress of the International Organization for Mycoplasmaology (IOM) at Baden, near Vienna, in June 1988. Comprising nearly 1000 pages, it begins with three general lectures by invited speakers, but the bulk of the Proceedings consists of some 77 full research papers in 15 sections, and 135 brief communications, representing poster presentations, in 14 sections. It is not a complete record, as several of the original Congress papers and many of the posters are not represented here.

Virtually all the main current areas of mycoplasmaological research are covered, including various aspects of human and animal infections due to *Mycoplasma* and *Ureaplasma* spp. and of plant infections due to *Spiroplasma* spp. or MLOs (non-cultivable "mycoplasma-like organisms"), as well as the taxonomy, biochemistry, molecular biology, genetics, cellular biology and immunobiology of mollicutes. However, only a few papers deal with the widespread problem and effects of mycoplasma contamination of cell cultures.

An individual review cannot adequately assess the varied contents of a volume of such length and breadth, but some papers are worth highlighting. These include one by Hu *et al.* confirming that the base sequence, UGA, codes for tryptophan synthesis in some mycoplasmas, whereas it is known to be a stop-codon in other organisms, suggesting potential difficulties in cloning mycoplasma genes containing tryptophan-coding sequences. Another paper by Kotani *et al.* reports the ability of a mouse-pathogenic spiroplasma, *S. mirum*, to cause malignant transformation of mouse fibroblasts. Several papers deal with the immunological and genetic relationships between *M. pneumoniae* and the rare genital isolate, *M. genitalium*. Unfortunately, there is no reference here to an important new observation actually reported (J. Baseman) at the Congress (and since published elsewhere), that *M. genitalium* has now been detected by nucleic acid probes and culture in frozen-stored respiratory material from an *M. pneumoniae* outbreak, raising questions as to its pathogenic potential outside the genital tract. Several papers reinforce observations by Waites, Cassell and colleagues in this and earlier publications, implicating *U. urealyticum* or *M. hominis* in fetal or neonatal infections, particularly of the respiratory tract or central nervous system and with associated fetal or infant morbidity and mortality. Other papers reflect the continuing search for effective diagnosis, prophylaxis or therapy for the many animal and poultry diseases caused by mycoplasmas. There is a fairly heavy emphasis on molecular-biological studies. These include some investigations of diagnostic genomic probes, but it seems that, as with human mycoplasma infections, such probes are not yet fulfilling their predicted role in the routine diagnosis of mycoplasmoses.

The main purpose of this type of compendium is as a research record and it is, therefore, no substitute for an orthodox text book if the reader requires primary general knowledge or detailed information about the mollicutes. However, it will certainly provide useful reports and some insights into recent (1988) approaches and advances in mycoplasmaology, for those interested in specific areas. As such, it is a useful reference work, albeit of somewhat dubious topicality because of its rather delayed publication date (after that of the succeeding IOM Congress of 1990). At

its listed price, this volume is clearly not intended primarily for sale to individual scientists, but it will be a necessary work of reference in any library serving those interested in mycoplasmaology.

R. H. LEACH

Q Fever. Volume I. The Disease

Edited by THOMAS J. MARRIE. 1990. CRC Press, Inc. Pp 255. £104.00.

This book gives a well-written and interesting account of the epidemiology and clinical aspects of Q fever. The enthusiasm of the authors for their subject is evident throughout and the contributors, mainly based in North America, have succeeded in achieving a well-balanced international perspective.

Twelve chapters consider the historical, veterinary and epidemiological aspects of the disease and give accounts of the infectious process, immune responses, clinical aspects of the acute and chronic forms, antibiotic susceptibility of *Coxiella burnetii*, perinatal aspects of infection and indications for vaccination. The text is complemented by plentiful, good-quality black and white illustrations and the clinical account gives a number of informative case histories. There are abundant references for further reading and a comprehensive and accurate index.

Q fever is a curiously variable disease in man, some outbreaks featuring mainly pneumonia, others hepatitis; also, chronic infection with endocarditis seems to occur more commonly in some countries (UK, France) than others (Germany, USA). The possibility that these features might relate in part to local strains of the organism and to different animal reservoirs of infection is critically discussed in various parts of the text.

The book is well produced and I found no significant typographical errors. It would have been helpful, however, to have included a note clearly describing the contents of the companion volume, '*Coxiella burnetii*—The Microorganism'. At £104 this is an expensive book but it is concise and informative and I would strongly recommend it to infectious disease physicians and others in veterinary, medical and laboratory fields with a general interest in zoonoses.

M. BARNHAM

Bailey & Scott's Diagnostic Microbiology. 8th Edition

ELLEN JO BARON and SYDNEY M. FINEGOLD. 1990. C V Mosby Company, St Louis. Pp 861 + Appendices. £43.50

The 8th edition of Bailey and Scott's *Diagnostic Microbiology*, now in its 50th year of publication, has 861 pages with 44 chapters, 3 appendices, a useful glossary of terms and an extensive index. Appropriate references are appended at the end of each chapter; they are mostly post-1980 and are heavily weighted towards the American literature. The overall layout is attractive, making for easy reading, and the principles as well as the methods of many basic procedures are clearly outlined in blue boxes adjacent to the appropriate areas of text. The photographic illustrations are mostly in colour and, with a few exceptions, are of good, but not outstanding, quality. Among those that do not reach the generally high standard are Figures 34:15, said to show a lipolytic reaction, and 39:1 in which violet pigmentation appears black; Figure 19:2 bears no discernible relationship to the caption.

Part 1 of the book (5 chapters) discusses the organisation and function of Clinical Microbiology laboratories and is both interesting and informative. Readers should resist the temptation to skip this part of the book in order to get to the 'meat' of the text. Part 2 (8 chapters) is concerned with the