

History of the Parasite Collection from the former Department of Veterinary Parasitology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Utrecht.

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Parasitologists from the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Utrecht collected during the 20th century animal parasites, mainly helminths and arthropods. Parasites were collected from patients of the clinics or institutes of the faculty, from patients of veterinary practitioners and Veterinary Health Services or were collected during research projects conducted at the Department of Veterinary Parasitology. The names of the "Department of Veterinary Parasitology" were successively: Institute for Parasitology and Parasitic Diseases, Department of Veterinary Helminthology and Entomology, Department of Parasitology and Tropical Veterinary Medicine. Here the Department will be indicated as Department of Parasitology. Cooperation with biological institutes and the Central Veterinary Institute in the Netherlands resulted also in acquiring parasites.

The core of the collection is formed by parasites from domesticated animals (mainly from horses, cattle, sheep goats, pigs and poultry) and from pet animals like dogs, cats, rodents, birds and fishes, and parasites from wild animals and exotic and zoo animals collected at post mortem examinations. A considerable part of the collection consists of parasites collected during research projects of the Department of Parasitology, especially parasites from the fauna in the Netherlands: trichostrongylids of wild deer (J. Jansen), bird parasites – mainly lice, fleas, hippoboscids and trematodes (E. van den Broek), parasites of amphibians (W. Hendrikx) and parasites from wild mammals for instance wild boars, badgers, porpoises. Horse strongylids (D. Swierstra) belong to this category as well. Parasites from animals in the former Dutch colonies -Indonesia, New Guinea, Suriname the Dutch Antilles- form part of the collection, as well as a collection of ectoparasites from animals in Madagascar (G. Uilenberg). To conclude a collection of paramphistomid trematodes (W. Dorsman) was acquired. The core of the parasite collection was formed between 1950-2000. Main contributors to the core of the collection were E. van den Broek, H. Cremers and J. Jansen.

The collection was used for diagnostic purposes, scientific study and exchange of specimens. The collection was stored according to systematic taxa. This storage system made the collection accessible. Accessibility was hampered, however, by the lack of a catalogue. In last decade of the 20th century the Department of Parasitology decided that the collection –representing parasite biodiversity- no longer matched the present research and teaching targets.

At that moment the collection consisted 13200 vials and 5160 microscopic slides. Fifteen type species formed part of the collection. The collection was considered to belong to national academic heritage, to be a specific example of national biodiversity, to have an European scientific status and to be of significance for the history of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Utrecht. With support of

the Stichting Academisch Erfgoed (SAE, Foundation of Academic Heritage) a plan for deselection was made. Deselection was done by H. Cremers and W. Hendriks. This well defined deselection protocol resulted in approximately 7000 vials and 1100 microscopic slides.

In 2006 the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and the University Museum of the University of Utrecht transferred the parasite collection to Naturalis, the National Museum of Natural History in Leiden. There the collection was restored, parasites were transferred to new vials and made accessible by a database. These activities were supported by a grant of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the SAE and the Mondriaan Foundation.