Preface
Small Animal Infectious Diseases
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Editor

Changes to the environment, transportation, technology, and our attitudes toward the animals that we share our lives with have occurred at breakneck speed since the last Small Animal Infectious Diseases issue in Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice in 2011. The phenomenon of climate change has made natural disasters a regular occurrence, resulting in emergency transport of animals to localities that are sometimes unprepared for their arrival. Domestic and international pet transport is now an everyday reality, making a thorough travel history a mandatory component of any veterinary visit, and demanding much broader expertise in infectious diseases that were once considered irrelevant beyond our own neighborhoods. New diagnostic modalities have revised traditional notions of reference standard tests, challenging researchers to pit one test against another to determine where each one fits in optimal case management. The human-animal bond continues to strengthen as we depend on companion animals increasingly for companionship and emotional support. This bond not only means that our physical proximity to our pets is closer than ever before but also demands that we aim to provide the same standards of health care for our pets that we receive from medical providers. The One Health movement, which held its first international congress in 2011, links physicians and veterinarians to achieve better health outcomes for people and animals, by improving communication and knowledge exchange, especially concerning zoonotic diseases and combating antibiotic resistance. Information has never been as readily available or as boundless as it is today, but there is also a minefield of misinformation for unwary consumers. Our ability to discriminate high-quality scientific evidence from opinion or ill-founded assertions is a skill that keeps yielding dividends for us and for our patients.

Does this make you feel like the world is spinning too fast for you to keep up? An important implication for practicing veterinarians is the need for at least a basic knowledge of an ever-growing list of infectious diseases. An understanding of practical, evidence-based infectious disease risk management for our patients and for us is also
vital in day-to-day practice. Critical and analytical skills are crucial to accessing reliable and accurate information from sources such as the Internet when more detailed information is required. This issue of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* features an array of topical and practical science from our colleagues at the forefront of the world of small animal infectious disease research. Common themes throughout the issue are the emergence of new pathogens and diseases, the spread of known pathogens into new territories, new technologies to help prevent and control infectious disease, and troublingly, our growing awareness of the consequences of inadequate prevention and control programs.

We live in challenging and turbulent times in the infectious disease world, but I believe that excellent, innovative science is the best way forward. I would like to sincerely thank my friends and colleagues who so ably authored the articles in this issue. They lead our profession toward deeper understanding and control of the pathogens that torment us, so that we can continue to care for the animals that delight us.

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