PREFACE

It was an honor to have been asked to edit this third Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice issue covering the topic of fluid therapy in small animal practice. The first volume, published in 1982, was a very exciting issue to produce because it was the first collection of clinically applicable articles on fluid therapy and electrolyte disorders since those that appeared in a special issue of the 1972 Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association. The decade spanning from the early 1970s to the early 1980s was an era highlighted by the increased availability of automated serum biochemical profiles and the increased use of indwelling intravenous catheters for fluid therapy by the small animal practitioner. It was also the period when knowledge of plasma acid-base and serum electrolyte disorders were identified as a significant problem in small animal medicine.

By the late 1980s, the vast amount of accumulated knowledge and the firm establishment of internal medicine as a veterinary specialty prompted the development of the second Veterinary Clinics issue (1989). This issue kept the small animal practitioner current on the newer concepts of fluid therapy and serum electrolyte and acid-base disorders. By this time, many veterinary practitioners were routinely doing serum electrolyte determinations on their patients and modifying their prescriptions for fluid therapy according to the specific needs of the animal.

Throughout the 1970s and ’80s, the veterinary profession showed a keen interest in the area of emergency and critical care medicine. This enthusiasm allowed for the development of new technology in patient monitoring devices, a whole new variety of catheters and associated fluid delivery systems, and improved treatments that have allowed us to successfully care for the most critically ill patient.

This third Veterinary Clinics issue provides the reader with important updated information about fluid therapy and serum electrolyte disorders. It brings together a very talented combination of both new and established authors who are well versed in the specialties of internal medicine, emergency and critical care, and anesthesiology. Through their combined efforts comes a volume that will keep us current not only in the more traditional topics of renal medicine
and serum calcium, sodium, and potassium disorders but also in the newer topics of importance to the critically ill patient such as hypo- and hypermagnesemia, enteral nutrition, and special considerations for the hypoproteinemic patient.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my very talented colleagues who sacrificed their "spare" time to write the valuable information provided in this text. I would also like to thank Mr. John Vassallo and the production staff at W.B. Saunders for providing us with their valuable editorial support and their encouragement to "say it like it is."

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