

## Editorial

The June issue of the *Journal of Helminthology* comprises selected papers presented at a special symposium on 'Ecological and environmental parasitology: the impact of global change' which took place in an idyllic location in Freudenstadt, Germany in the Spring of 2005 and herein referred to as *The Black Forest Symposium*. These papers focus on aspects of global change with reference to invasive parasite species, environmental pollution, climate change, co-evolution and immunology and anthropogenic influences on host–parasite systems. The majority are reviews on topics dealing with strategies used by specific parasites to invade hosts and colonize new territories and how temperature influences the population biology of neozotic parasites. The impact of pollution both in aquatic and terrestrial habitats is shown on the one hand to increase parasitism in some host–parasite relationships, but this can also produce negative effects on other parasite communities. Examples are presented where parasites can be used as bioindicators of pollution especially in aquatic environments. Both pollution and climate change can influence parasite species composition in communities and biotopes and increases in temperature, together with extreme climatic events, are shown to stabilize and accelerate parasite development. However, longitudinal surveys are clearly essential in furthering our understanding of the population dynamics of host–parasite systems, whereas an evolutionary approach is required in the analysis and assessment of interactions between hosts and parasites. Evolutionary and immunological processes are shown to be especially important when parasites are introduced into new habitats with naïve hosts. The impact of anthropogenesis focuses on the distribution and abundance of *Echinococcus multilocularis* in urban environments worldwide where this zoonotic cestode parasite poses a potential human health risk.



I wish to express my sincere and grateful thanks to Dr Bernd Sures and Professor Horst Taraschewski, Zoological Institute, Parasitology–Ecology, University of Karlsruhe, Germany for their exceptional initiative and enthusiasm in organizing such an excellent symposium and also for their invaluable contributions to this special issue of the journal. Both Dr Sures and Professor Taraschewski were responsible for attracting leading authorities in the field to present and participate in *The Black Forest Symposium*, ranging from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK, USA and Yemen. The Volkswagen Foundation is also gratefully acknowledged for generously funding the meeting.

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Editor