

Importation of "Exotic" Ticks (Ixodoidea) in Switzerland

AESCHLIMANN, A. and P. CHATELANAT

Inst. de Zoologie, Univ., CH-2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Here we do not speak only of the regular, often yearly, importation of exotic ticks into Switzerland, but also of their possibility of surviving in our country, be it outdoors or inside of houses or apartments. Species such as *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*, *R. bursa*, *Haemaphysalis sulcata* and *Hyalomma marginatum* and especially mentioned, but also "rarities" such as *Amblyomma tholoni*, *Ixodes caledonicus* and *Argas transgaripepinus*. – The possibility that such imported ticks can act as vectors of pathogenic microorganisms was confirmed in the region of Geneva. Three members of the same family were infected by *R. sanguineus* and afterwards all of them developed rickettsiosis. The ticks were probably carried into Geneva by the family dog, after the family vacationed in the South of France. 24.14% of the ticks collected in the apartment were infected with a rickettsia which was identified as *Rickettsia*

conorii. *R. sanguineus* can therefore be a lasting source of pathogenic rickettsia in Central Europe. The danger becomes even greater because this species can be easily transported from region to region, from house to house, from kennel to house and vice-versa. They can also live in the wild and thus infect other dogs. – It is therefore important to inform the medical and veterinary authorities of the possible danger of infection resulting from having pets and from travelling.

Keywords: *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*, *Rickettsia conorii*, importation, Switzerland