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UTAH UNIV SALT LAKE CITY ECOLOGY AND EPIZOOLOGY RESE--ETC F/G 6/5
STUDIES ON ECOLOGY OF Q FEVER IN NATIVE FAUNA IN THE GREAT SALT--ETC(U)
JUN 61 E D VEST, J B BUSHMAN, N J MARCHETTE DA-42-007-403-CML-427
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STUDIES ON ECOLOGY OF Q FEVER IN NATIVE FAUNA in the GREAT SALT LAKE DESERT

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SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT

E. DEAN VEST, JOHN B. BUSHMAN, NYVEN J. MARCHETTE, DALE D. PARKER,
D. ELMER JOHNSON, DAVID L. LUNDGREN, EVERETT L. MORSE,
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Institute of Environmental Biological Research
Ecology and Epizootology Series No. 66*

June 30, 1961

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PRESUMPTIVE SAFETY REPORT

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in the
GREAT SALT LAKE DESERT,

9 SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT,

10 E. Dean/Vest, John B./Bushman, Nyven J./Marchette, Dale D./Parker
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14 ~~Institute of Environmental Biological Research~~
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The first recognized case of Q fever in man in the United States occurred in Montana in 1941 (Hesdorfer and Duffaloe, 1941). This report was soon followed by accounts of human Q fever outbreaks in Amarillo, Texas (Irons et al, 1946); Chicago, Illinois (Shepard, 1947); and Los Angeles, California (Young, 1948). These cases usually could be directly associated with livestock. In 1949 a serological survey of human sera from many areas indicated that Q fever occurred in low incidence throughout the country (Strauss and Sulkin, 1949). Subsequent studies have supported this conclusion. Luoto (1960) reported that Q fever occurs in cattle throughout the United States.

Until recently, considerably more effort has been expended studying the incidence and distribution of Q fever in livestock and humans than in wildlife. An early study on Moreton Island, off the coast of Australia, presented evidence for a simple cycle of Q fever maintained in bandicoots, Isodon torosus, and their ticks, Haemaphysalis humerosa (Derrick and Smith, 1939), but early surveys of wild animals elsewhere were not so successful. Parker et al, (1948) tested the sera of several hundred wild vertebrates, but could demonstrate antibody against C. burnetii in only one animal, a porcupine (Erethizon epizanthum epizanthum). No evidence of Q fever was found in wild mammals or birds in England collected in an endemic area (Stoker and Marmion, 1955a). More recently, however, there have been numerous reports of evidence of Q fever in wild vertebrates throughout the world (Table 1), culminating finally in the isolation of C. burnetii from wild mammals in Utah, as a result of a large scale survey involving several thousand specimens (Stoenner et al, 1958).

From these discoveries, the probable existence of a C. burnetii cycle among wildlife, independent of the domestic animal ecological complex in the United States, was suggested by Stoenner et al (1959). In other parts of the world

this certainly seems to be the case. Natural Q fever infection has been reported in 68 species of wild vertebrates from five continents (Table 1). Rodents and rabbits are most often involved, but birds are occasionally infected, and in one case an antelope was reported to have suffered from a naturally acquired Q fever infection.

Biting arthropods are likewise well represented among the naturally infected wildlife. Coxiella burnetii has been isolated from at least 31 species of ticks, two species of lice, and two of mites. Some, but not all, of these arthropods have been shown experimentally to be capable vectors of the rickettsiae (Table 2).

On the laboratory level, C. burnetii has been shown in one study to persist in guinea pigs, principally in the spleen and kidney, 40-110 days after defervescence, depending upon the strain of organism used (Parker and Steinhaus, 1943). In another study the organisms persisted for up to 526 days after defervescence in guinea pigs (Reczko, 1950). In laboratory mice, C. burnetii persists for up to 80 days in the kidneys (DeMattia et al, 1952); and in white rats, urine was infective from the 13th-38th day after infection (Syruczek and Sobeslavsky, 1956).

Parker et al, (1948) tested seven species of wild rodents, one species of cottontail rabbit, and two species of birds, and found all to be susceptible to experimental Q fever. Bandicoots (Derrick et al, 1939) and nine other species of Australian bush animals were susceptible to intraperitoneal infection with C. burnetii, but in all cases the infection was mild, often inapparent, and none of the animals died (Derrick et al, 1940). Experimental Q fever in the forest mouse of Czechoslovakia produced no noticeable illness, but a rickettsemia was present from the first through the 12th day (Rehn,

1958). Zhmaeva and Pchelkina (1957) reported lemmings to be readily infected with C. burnetii. In Morocco, Meriones shawi, Xerus getulus and Aetichinus algirus, were reported to be susceptible to experimental infection (Blanc et al, 1947b). In one study on foxes inoculated subcutaneously, no apparent illness resulted, no rickettsemia was detected, and no isolations were made from tissues examined 30 days after inoculation. Complement fixing antibody against C. burnetii, however, rose to a significant titer within 15 days (Rehn, 1958).

Parker et al, (1948) and Sobeslavsky and Syrucek (1959) reported some birds to be susceptible to experimental Q fever; the latter investigators reporting the isolation of C. burnetii from the spleen of chickens one year after infection, and from the ovaries of second generation chickens hatched from eggs laid by the experimentally infected hens. Babudieri and Moscovici (1952) recovered C. burnetii from the kidney of pigeons six weeks after intraperitoneal and oral exposure.

TABLE 1. Wild animals naturally infected with Coxiella burnetii
 Wild animals naturally infected with C. burnetii as indicated by positive serology or by isolation of
 organisms from tissues.

Species	Common Name	Country	Diag- nosis	Pertinent reference
<u>AVES</u>				
<u>Buteoninae</u>				
_____	Eagle	Russia	S	Borisov et al., 1959
<u>Picidae</u>				
<u>Emberiza citrinella</u>	Yellowhammer	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Dryobates major</u>	Great spotted woodpecker	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Alanidae</u>				
_____	Lark	Russia	S	Borisov et al., 1959
<u>Mirundinidae</u>				
<u>Hirundo rustica</u>	Swallow	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Delichon urbica</u>	House martin	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Corvidae</u>				
_____	Crow	Russia	S	Borisov et al., 1959
<u>Paridae</u>				
<u>Parus major</u>	Great tit	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Troglodytidae</u>				
<u>Troglodytes troglodytes</u>	Wren	Czechoslovakia	S	Syrucek and Raska, 1956
<u>Motacillidae</u>				
<u>Motacilla alba</u>	White wagtail	Czechoslovakia	I, S	Raska and Syrucek, 1956; Syrucek and Raska, 1956; Syrucek et al., 1955

S = Evidence of infection determined serologically, only.

I = Evidence of infection determined by isolation of Coxiella burnetii.

— = Information not given in cited reference.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

MAMMALIA (cont'd)

	Hedgehog	Roumania	I, S	Zarnea et al., 1959
<u>Insectivora</u>				
<u>Chiroptera</u>				
<u>Erinaceidae</u>				
<u>Erinaceus europaeus</u>				
<u>Vespertilionidae</u>				
<u>Eptesicus isobellinus</u>	Bat	Morocco	I	Blanc and Bruneau, 1957
_____	Bat	Russia	I	Lisunkina, 1960b
<u>Mustelidae</u>				
_____	White weasel	Russia	S	Zhmaeva et al., 1956
<u>Sciuridae</u>				
<u>Eutamias minimus</u>	Least chipmunk	Utah (U.S.)	S	Stoenner et al., 1959
<u>Citellus pygmaeus</u>	Steppe marmot	Russia	S	Zhmaeva et al., 1959
<u>Spermophilopsis leptodactylus</u>	Suslik	Russia	I	Zhmaeva & Pchelkina, 1957
<u>Heteromyidae</u>				
<u>Rhombomys epimus</u>	Gerbil	Russia	I (S?)	Zhmaeva et al., 1955
<u>Bipodomys mizeops</u>	Chisel-toothed kangaroo rat	Utah (U.S.)	I, S	Stoenner et al., 1959
<u>D. ordii</u>	Ord kangaroo rat	Utah (U.S.)	I, S	Stoenner et al., 1959
<u>Perognathus longimembris</u>	Little pocket mouse	Utah (U.S.)	I	Lundgren & Sidwell (Unpub)
<u>Meriones shawi</u>	Gerbil	Morocco	I	Blanc et al., 1947a
<u>Cricetidae</u>				
<u>Onychomys leucogaster</u>	Northern grasshopper mouse	Utah (U.S.)	S	Stoenner et al., 1959
<u>Apodemus sylvaticus</u>	Forest mouse	Morocco	I	Blanc and Bruneau, 1956a
<u>Clethrionomys glareolus</u>	Red-backed mouse	Czechoslovakia	I, S	Raska et al., 1956
<u>C. rufocanus</u>	Wood vole	Russia	I	Nikhinson et al., 1958
<u>C. rutilus</u>	Wood vole	Russia	I	Nikhinson et al., 1958
<u>Eliomys quercinus</u>	Spanish dormouse	Spain	I, S	Perez Gallardo et al., 1952

S = Evidence of infection determined serologically, only

I = Evidence of infection determined by isolation of Coxiella burnetii

_____ = Information not given in cited reference

TABLE 1 (continued)

		<u>Rodentia (cont'd)</u>		
<u>Cricetidae (cont'd)</u>				
<u>Lemniscomys barbarus</u>		Morocco	I	Blanc and Bruneau, 1956a
<u>L. striatus</u>		Kenya	I, S	Heisch, 1960
<u>Peromyscus maniculatus</u>		Utah (U.S.)	I (S?)	Stoenner et al., 1959
<u>Neotoma micropus</u>		Texas (U.S.)	S	Irons et al., 1952
<u>Cricetulus migratorius</u>		Russia	S	Bekrimieov et al., 1956
		Russia	S	Zhmaeva et al., 1956
<u>Apodemus flavicollis</u>		Czechoslovakia	S	Raska and Syrucek, 1956
<u>Microtus arvalis</u>		Czechoslovakia	S	Raska et al., 1956
<u>Arvalis terrestris</u>		Czechoslovakia	S	Raska et al., 1956
		Russia	S	Sterkhova and Akhundov, 1959
		Russia	S	Sterkhova and Akhundov, 1959
<u>Muridae</u>				
<u>Mus musculus</u>		Czechoslovakia	I, S	Raska et al., 1956
<u>Rattus culmorum youngi</u>		Australia	S	Freeman et al., 1940
<u>R. norvegicus</u>		Czechoslovakia	I	Raska et al., 1956
		Russia	I	Sterkhova & Akhundov, 1959
<u>Leporidae</u>				
<u>Lagomorpha</u>				
<u>Cryptolagus cuniculus</u>		Central Europe	S	Blanc & Bruneau, 1953
<u>Lepus californicus</u>		Spain	I	Perez Gallardo et al., 1952
		Utah (U.S.)	S	Stoenner et al., 1959; and Lechleitner, 1959
<u>L. europaeus</u>		Czechoslovakia	S	Raska et al., 1956
		Russia	S	Zhmaeva et al., 1956
<u>Artiodactyla</u>				
<u>Antilocapridae</u>				
<u>Antelope subgutturosa</u>		Russia	S	Zhmaeva and Pchelkina, 1957
<u>Cervidae</u>				
		Russia	S	Nikinson et al., 1958
		Russia	S	Proreshnaia and Mishchenko

S = Evidence of infection determined serologically, only

I = Evidence of infection determined by isolation of Coxiella burnetii

_ = Information not given in cited reference

TABLE 2. Biting arthropods naturally infected with Coxiella burnetii. Those capable of transmitting C. burnetii experimentally as indicated by isolation of rickettsia. Those capable of transmitting C. burnetii experimentally indicated by an asterisk, with pertinent reference of transmission listed in footnote.

Species	Country	Pertinent reference of isolation	Hosts on which infected ticks were found
<u>TICKS</u>			
<u>Amblyomma americanum</u>	Texas (U.S.)	Parker and Kohls, 1943	Goats, cattle, dogs
<u>A. trigguttatum</u>	Australia	Pope et al., 1960	Kangaroos, goats, sheep
<u>A. variegatum</u>	Africa	Blanc et al., 1950	Buffaloes
<u>Argas persicus</u>	Russia	Lisunkina, 1960a	?
<u>A. reflexus</u>	Russia	Zhmaeva et al., 1955	Sparrows
* <u>Dermacentor andersonii</u> ¹	Montana (U.S.)	Davis and Cox, 1938	?
<u>D. occidentalis</u>	Australia	Cox, 1940	?
<u>D. parumapertus</u>	Utah (U.S.)	Stoenner et al., 1959	Jack rabbits
* <u>Haemaphysalis humerosa</u>	Australia	Smith & Derrick, 1940	Bandicoots
<u>H. leachi</u>	Africa	Giroud, 1951	Dogs, cows
<u>H. leporis-palustris</u>	Virginia (U.S.)	Kohls, 1948	Rabbits
<u>H. punctata</u>	Britain	Stoker and Marmion, 1955b	Sheep
<u>Hyalomma anatolicum (excavatum)</u>	Russia	Proshnaia & Mishchenko, 1958	?
<u>Hy. detritum</u>	Russia	Zhmaeva et al., 1955	?
<u>Hy. drosedarii</u>	Africa	Blanc et al., 1948; and Taylor et al., 1952	Dromedaries
<u>Hy. excavatum</u>	Africa	Blanc & Bruneau 1956b; and Taylor et al., 1952	Rabbits, cattle
<u>Hy. e. lysutanicum</u>	Africa	Blanc et al., 1948; and Taylor et al., 1951	Gerbils
* <u>Hy. marginatum</u> ³	Spain ?	Perez Gallardo, 1949	Calves
<u>Hy. mauritanicum</u>	Africa	Blanc and Bruneau, 1949	Cattle
* <u>Hy. plumbeus</u> ⁴	Russia	Bektemirov et al., 1956	Domestic and wild animals
<u>Hy. savitnyi</u>	Spain, Africa	Parker et al., 1949; and Blanc et al., 1946	Sheep and goats

¹Parker and Davis, 1938; ²Smith, 1940; ³Zhmaeva et al., 1955; ⁴Zhmaeva et al., 1955.

TABLE 2 (continued)

	TICKS (cont'd)		
<u>Ixodes cranulatus</u>	Russia	Pchelkina et al., 1956	Polecat
<u>I. dentatus</u>	Virginia and New York (U.S.)	Kohls, 1948	Rabbits
* <u>I. holocyclus</u> ⁵	Australia	Carley and Pope, 1953	? Dogs
<u>I. ricinus</u>	North Europe	Hengle et al., 1950	? ? ? ? ?
<u>Leeuwenhoekia major</u>	Russia	Zhmaeva and Pchelkina	
* <u>Ornithodoros erraticus</u> ⁶	Africa	Blanc and Bruneau, 1955	
<u>Orn. lahorensis</u>	Turkey	Payzin and Array, 1952	
* <u>Orn. Moubata</u> ⁷	Central Africa	Jadin, 1951	
<u>Orn. tartakowskyi</u>	Russia	Zhmaeva and Pchelkina, 1957	
<u>Otobius megnini</u>	U. S.	Jellison et al., 1956	Cattle
<u>Rhipicephalus bursa</u>	Russia	Bektimirov et al., 1956	Domestic & wild animals
* <u>R. sanguineus</u> ⁸	Arizona (U.S.) Italy	Parker and Sussman, 1949 Mantovani & Benazzi, 1953; and Perez Gallardo et al., 1949	Dogs Dormice
<u>Ornithomyia biloba</u>	Czechoslovakia		? ?
<u>Pediculus corporis</u>	Africa	LICE Syrucek and Raska, 1956 Giroud, 1951	
<u>Dermanyssus passerinus</u>	Russia	MITES Zhmaeva et al., 1955	Sparrows
<u>Steatonyssus viator</u>	Russia	Zhmaeva et al., 1955	? ?

⁵Smith, 1941; ⁶Blanc and Bruneau, 1956c; ⁷Davis, 1943; ⁸Smith, 1941.

RESULTS

1 - Mammalian susceptibility to parenteral inoculation: In the first laboratory experiment it was found that 11 species of rodents, Peromyscus maniculatus, P. truei, P. crinitus, Citellus leucurus, Perognathus parvus, Dipodomys ordii, D. microps, Reithrodontomys megalotis, Onychomys leucogaster, Neotoma lepida, and Microtus montanus, were highly susceptible to C. burnetii (AD strain), administered by parenteral inoculation, as determined by 28-day complement fixing antibody response. Infection was seldom lethal, but the organism reproduced rapidly in the tissues of all species. The ID₅₀ in all rodent species tested was approximately 10¹ to 10³ guinea pig ID₅₀s.

In a second experiment studying the susceptibility of rodents, animals of 5 species, D. ordii, M. montanus, N. lepida, P. maniculatus and P. truei, were investigated further to determine a criterion of infection which would yield the most reliable ID₅₀. Criteria of infection employed were splenomegaly (enlargement at least 2 x normal), tissue infectivity (as determined by subinoculating guinea pigs with tissue pool homogenates), and complement fixing antibody response to egg-adapted (Phase II) antigen, all at 28 days after injection. Guinea pigs and white mice were investigated similarly to provide comparative data.

At 28 days, spleen enlargement of some degree was exhibited in all species of wild animals tested, but gross enlargement was generally noted only in those animals receiving comparatively concentrated inocula. Splenomegaly was absent in all guinea pigs at this time. Definite complement fixing antibody response was noted in animals of each species tested; titers usually ranging from 1:16 to greater than 1:256 in P. maniculatus, P. truei and N. lepida; 1:16 to 1:128 in D. ordii; 1:128 to greater than 1:256 in

M. montanus and white mice. Non-specific antibody titers of 1:8 to 1:16 were observed in occasional P. maniculatus, P. truei, and N. lepida normal controls, consequently only titers of 1:32 or greater were considered an indication of infection in these animals. The presence of infectious numbers of C. burnetii in pools of tissue of all animal species was demonstrated 28 days after injection. Microscopic examination of stained tissue smears seldom revealed rickettsiae.

Comparative ID₅₀s for this portion of the investigation are indicated in Table 3. All rodent species had ID₅₀s which were in general about 10¹ to 10² guinea pig or white mouse ID₅₀s.

2 - Pathogenesis (Rickettsemia and Carrier State). Coxiella burnetii persisted in the blood stream of P. maniculatus, N. lepida, and Sylvilagus audubonii for at least 3 weeks following subcutaneous inoculation.

Coxiella burnetii was demonstrated in the blood stream of coyote pups for up to 7 weeks after subcutaneous inoculation with 10⁹ guinea pig ID₅₀s, and in the blood stream of bobcats, Lynx rufus, for up to nine days after similar exposure. The organism persisted for at least three weeks in the spleens of bobcats.

The organism persisted for 12 to 36 weeks in the tissues of P. maniculatus, P. truei, N. lepida, M. montanus, D. ordii, and S. audubonii. Kidney, spleen, and liver were particularly infected.

3 - Mammalian susceptibility to field aerosol. The effect of an aerosol of C. burnetii on 7 species of wild rodents exposed under field conditions was studied. Twenty-five groups of 11 animals each were placed at predetermined positions 3/4 to 11 miles from the source of the aerosol. Each group was

TABLE 3. Susceptibility of laboratory animals and wild rodents to intraperitoneal infection with AD strain, *Coxiella burnetii*. Data presented as ID₅₀,⁵ calculated by the Reed & Muench method (1938), and standard error, estimated by the method described by Pizzi (1950), according to each criterion for determining infection.

Type of Animal	ID ₅₀ and S. E. - Fever Response ¹	ID ₅₀ and S. E. - Antibody Response ²	ID ₅₀ and S. E. - Tissue Infection ³	ID ₅₀ and S. E. - Splenomegaly ⁴
<u>Cavia cobaya</u> Guinea pig	10-9.1 10-8.9 to 10-9.3	10-9.3 10-9.1 to 10-9.5	10-9.2 10-9.0 to 10-9.4	No response at dilutions employed
<u>Dipodomys ordii</u> Ord kangaroo rat	Not determined	(10-9 to 10-10)	(10-9 to 10-10)	10-7.8 10-7.4 to 10-8.2
<u>Microtus montanus</u> Montane meadow mouse	Not determined	10-8.6 10-8.4 to 10-8.9	10-8.3 10-8.2 to 10-8.4	10-8.2 10-7.9 to 10-8.4
<u>Mus musculus</u> White mouse	Not determined	10-9.3 10-8.9 to 10-9.7	10-8.6 10-8.2 to 10-8.6	10-8.2 10-8.9 to 10-9.6
<u>Neotoma lepida</u> Desert wood rat	Not determined	10-8.5 10-8.3 to 10-8.7	10-8.4 10-8.2 to 10-8.6	10-8.4 10-8.2 to 10-8.6
<u>Peromyscus maniculatus</u> Deer mouse	Not determined	10-8.3 10-8.1 to 10-8.5	(10-6 to 10-8)	10-7.4 10-7.1 to 10-7.7
<u>Peromyscus truei</u> Pinyon mouse	Not determined	10-8.3 10-8.1 to 10-8.5	10-8.3 10-8.1 to 10-8.5	10-8.3 10-8.1 to 10-8.5

¹ A well-defined, sustained rise above 104,0°F.

² Phase II CF titers of 1:16 or greater in Ord kangaroo rats; 1:32 or greater in all other animals.

³ Determined by 28-day Phase II CF titers in guinea pigs sub-inoculated with pooled homogenates of heart, kidney, liver, lung and spleen.

⁴ At least 2 x normal.

⁵ Expressed as dilutions of *C. burnetii* - egg yolk sac slurry.

() Insufficient data for calculation of ID₅₀.

composed of the following rodents: 3 deer mice, P. maniculatus; 1 canyon mouse, P. crinitus; 2 grasshopper mice, O. leucogaster; 2 Ord kangaroo rats, D. ordii; 1 chisel-toothed kangaroo rat, D. microps; 1 wood rat, N. lepida; and 1 antelope ground squirrel, C. leucurus.

An overall infection rate of 62% was recorded. Under field conditions the C. burnetii aerosol was highly infectious for native rodents. Individuals of each of the above species developed Q fever.

4. Mammalian antibody response. Three types of antibody to the AD strain of C. burnetii were studied with regard to time of formation, concentration and duration in intraperitoneally infected D. ordii, M. montanus, N. lepida, P. maniculatus and P. truei. Guinea pigs and white mice were also studied to provide comparative data. The types of antibody studied were Phase II complement fixing (CF) (detected using antigen prepared from egg-adapted rickettsiae); Phase I complement fixing (detected using antigen prepared from animal-adapted rickettsiae); and capillary tube (CT) agglutination antibody. Results are shown in Fig. 1. Phase II CF antibody was produced 1 to 2 weeks following infection in all species of animals tested, and peak titers were reached by 3 to 5 weeks. Phase I CF antibody and CT agglutination antibody were first demonstrated at 3 to 5 weeks and increased to peak titers 6 to 36 weeks after infection, depending upon animal species. In most animals, Phase II CF antibody titers were higher than Phase I CF or CT agglutination antibody titers. Antibody persistence was followed for 36 to 52 weeks, depending upon animal type. D. ordii produced little demonstrable Phase I CF or CT agglutination antibody.

The antibody response to formalin inactivated C. burnetii was studied in the previously named 5 species of wild rodents. This was undertaken in an attempt to relate antibody response to infection. Results are shown in Fig. 2.

MAMMALIAN ANTIBODY RESPONSES TO VIABLE Q FEVER RICKETTSIAE

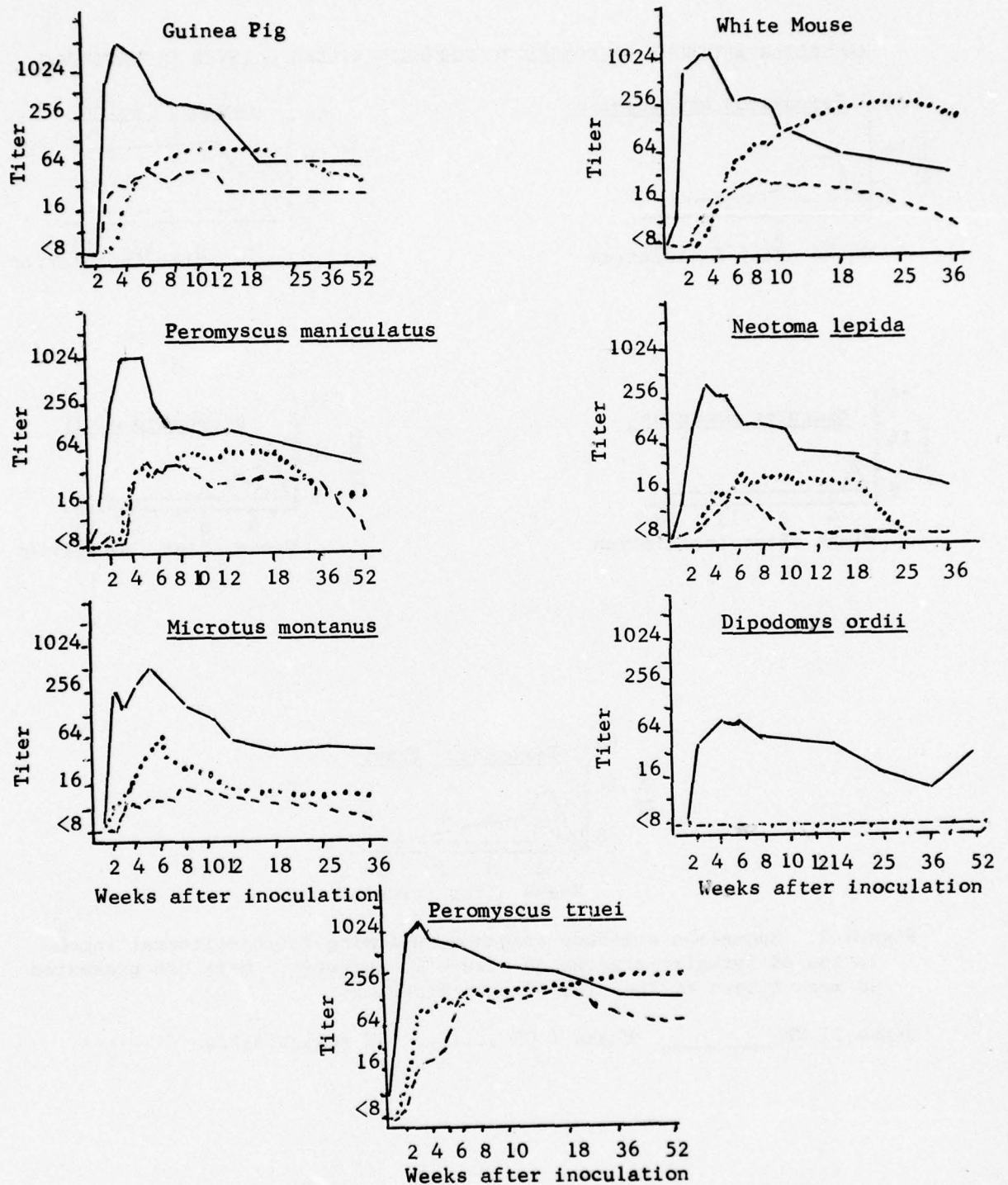


Figure 1. Mammalian antibody response following intraperitoneal injection of the AD strain *C. burnetii*. Data presented as mean titers at the time of each bleeding. Phase II CF _____ Phase I CF CT Agglutination -----

MAMMALIAN ANTIBODY RESPONSES TO FORMALIN KILLED Q FEVER RICKETTSIAE

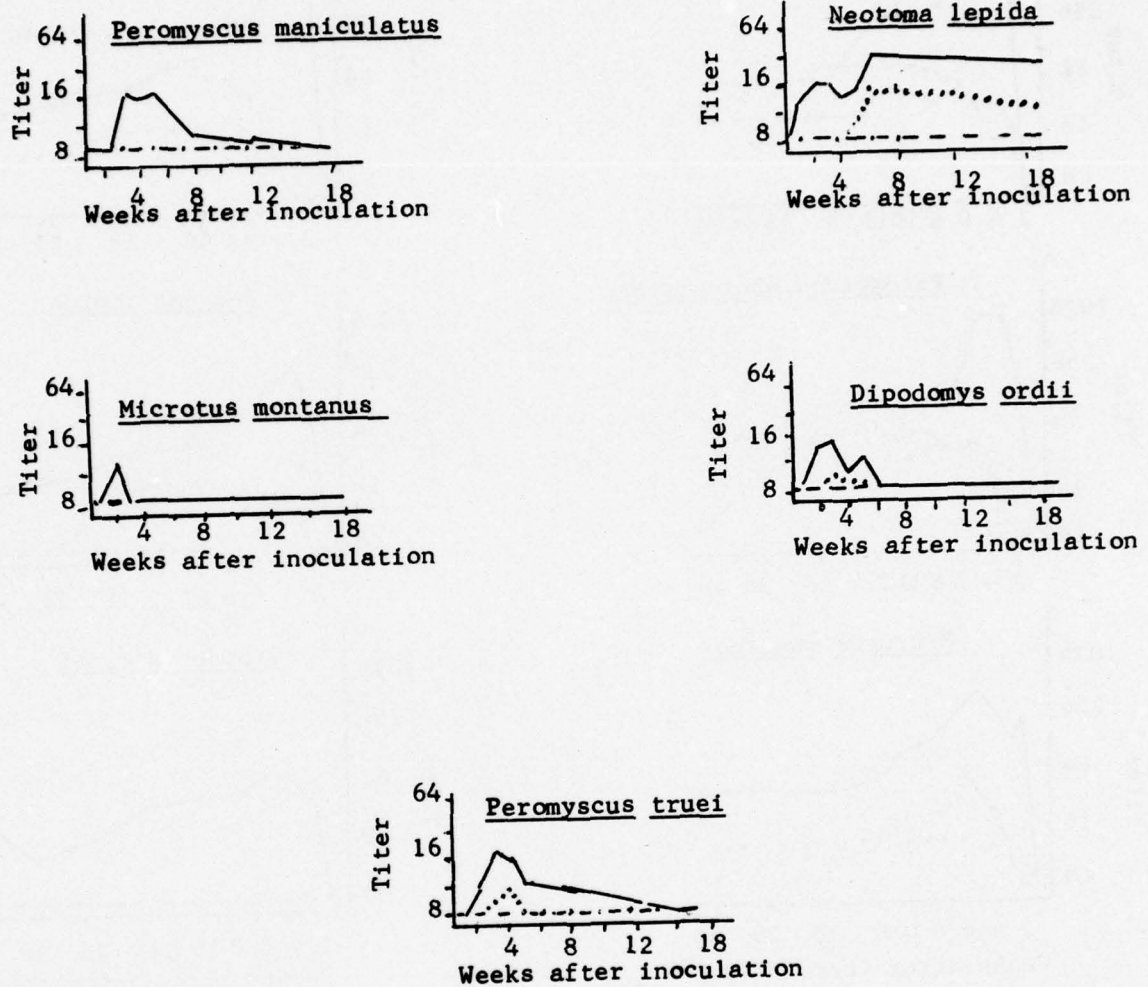


Figure 2. Mammalian antibody response following intraperitoneal inoculation of formalin-treated AD strain *C. burnetii*. Data are presented as mean titers at the time of each bleeding.

Phase II CF _____ Phase I CF CT Agglutination -----

Low titers of Phase II CF antibody were produced in all rodent species. An occasional Phase I CF antibody titer was exhibited in sera from D. ordii, N. lepida, and P. truei. No agglutinating antibody could be detected.

5 - Experimental arthropod transmission. Ticks of three species, Ixodes kingi, Dermacentor parumapertus, and Ornithodoros hermsi, were found to be infected throughout their normal life. Currently, infected ticks held in our laboratory have remained infective for more than 200 days.

Both single and multiple-host ticks occur in this area. Multiple-host ticks attach to host animals only while feeding and then drop off to molt. Single-host ticks attach during the larval stage, molt to nymphs, engorge, drop off the host, molt to adults, mate, lay eggs, and die. They never reattach to a new host. Because of their habits, the single-host feeders would seem to be of little importance from an epizootiological standpoint because they are limited to a single host. Nevertheless, they cannot be completely ignored since they are readily eaten by rodents, and the infection may be transmitted in this manner. Some of these ticks have remained infective in our laboratory for as long as 10 days after death, and healthy rodents eating these dead ticks have become infected.

Because of the longevity and the nature of the life history of the ticks, transmission experiments are still in progress, and will not be completed until the ticks mature.

Three species of native fleas became infected after feeding on deer mice. Several groups of native fleas retained viable organisms up to three weeks after infection. Two species, Thrassis bacchi gladiolis and Orchopeas leucopus, became desiccated and died after 5 to 8 days at room

temperature. They lived longer (two to four weeks) when held at 4 to 12 C. Another species, Q. sexdentatus, was not tested at room temperature to determine the longevity of the organisms, but remained infective for up to 17 days when held at 8 C. Uninfected controls lived longer under both temperature conditions than did those groups which carried the rickettsiae, indicating that the rickettsiae had a deleterious effect upon the fleas. Tests were conducted to determine if the organisms multiply in the fleas to the extent that they can be transmitted. In all experiments, native fleas failed to transmit Q fever organisms.

6 - Epizootological studies of Q fever. During the summer of 1954 a comprehensive study of diseases endemic to western Utah and eastern Nevada was undertaken by Ecological Research, University of Utah; and Rocky Mountain Laboratory, USPHS. The personnel of the former established the sample areas, studied the habitat, obtained samples and shipped them to the latter to examine for evidence of pathogenic organisms. This arrangement was continued until 1957, since when the entire study has been conducted by Ecological Research, University of Utah.

Since the basic objective of this study was to determine the ecology of disease in relation to Dugway Proving Ground (DPG), permanent sampling areas were located throughout DPG and in significant wildlife populations surrounding it. These permanent sampling areas were trapped systematically each year, and on the strength of this trapping, a basis was provided for comparative studies of the ecology of endemic disease organisms. Other areas were established beyond these permanent sampling areas to provide adequate controls, to supply additional information, and to aid in determining disease spread in relation to DPG. These latter areas were not sampled regularly, but rather only as information was needed.

From the summer of 1954 to the end of 1960, a total of 14,247 vertebrate wildlife specimens were collected from all sampling areas. An attempt was made to obtain approximately 2,000 samples per year in order to compare results. However, systematic trapping produced some variation from this number, probably due to population variations and other changing factors. Trapping in 1954 did not produce a complete annual sample since the program started during the summer of that year. From 1955 to 1960 annual samples ranged from a minimum of 1,782 in 1957 to a maximum of 2,860 in 1958. Essentially, these extremes represent a relatively uniform sampling technique, but indicate a variable population. The evidence of Q fever in these wildlife specimens was grouped according to whether it was found in mammalian tissue pools, ectoparasite pools, or individual serum samples. The incidence of infection, in relation to host species and area, is indicated to provide information regarding the ecology of the organism.

Q fever positive tissues were found in wildlife in 1955, and in 1957 through 1960 (Table 4). The first tissues infected with Q fever rickettsiae were taken from deer mice captured on Little Davis Mountain and Camelback Mountain, located near the east and south border of the Proving Ground, respectively. It is of some interest to note that both locations are adjacent to sheep range and bedding grounds, certainly not eliminating the possibility of infection from this source. Both areas are only a short distance from the locus of the first seropositive jack rabbit collected one year earlier just inside the Proving Ground fence, near the southeast border.

All samples tested were negative in 1956. In 1957 samples with positive tissue were obtained from 3 areas. One of these samples was collected 40 miles west of DGP; one near the northeast border, and the other in the proximity of the center of DPG. Of the three areas in which positive tissue

TABLE 4. INCIDENCE OF Q FEVER IN WILDLIFE TISSUE ACCORDING TO AREA. Areas from which wildlife specimens were collected that exhibited evidence of *Coxiella burnetii* in the tissues. These are listed as the number positive over the number collected for each year.

Area	1954**	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Callao		0/132	0/352	1/225	0/175	3/371	2/145
Camelback Mountain		1/55	0/214	0/7	0/91	3/371	8/154
CD 22			0/19		1/110	0/20	0/68
Deep Creek	0/18				0/9	0/16	2/49
Dugway Mountain	0/16					0/23	0/60
Dugway Valley		0/2			1/82	2/72	0/31
Fish Springs	0/128	0/102	0/71	0/113	1/52	1/50	4/86
Gold Hill	0/137	0/140	0/351	0/293	0/216	3/179	2/104
Government Creek	0/9	0/113	0/121	0/138	1/34	4/295	3/183
Granite Mountain	0/210	0/120	0/8		0/47	0/38	0/49
Johnson Pass		0/72		0/19	0/85	0/107	0/2
Little Davis Mountain		1/379	0/222	0/195	0/107	0/122	0/56
Lookout Pass						0/47	0/92
North Skull Valley			0/90	0/23	0/244	0/132	0/136
Old River Bed			0/2	0/43	0/296	0/104	0/56
South Cedar Mountain		0/461	0/18	2/237	2/446	0/49	3/253
South Skull Valley	0/19	0/288	0/97	0/218	0/15	0/29	3/72
Test Grid	0/60	0/10	0/74	3/186	1/125	0/20	3/67
Trout Creek		0/23		0/5		1/34	2/239
Vernon		0/38			0/60	0/51	0/42
Wendover					4/582	1/329	0/250
Wig Mountain			0/293	0/80	0/54	0/113	0/56
Wildcat Mountain	0/131				0/30		0/38
Other areas*							
Totals	0/278	2/2019	0/1392	6/1782	11/2860	15/2481	32/2389

** Collections were made for the last half of this year, only.

* Includes Duchesne, Grouse Creek and Logan.

samples were recorded, the first two were obtained near or on domestic animal range land. The other positive tissue was obtained from a jack rabbit. Since 1957, positive tissues have been taken from animals in 13 of the 23 regular sample areas. It can be noted that the mountain populations to the west, north, and east, namely: Granite, Wildcat, and Wig Mountain, did not contain detectable Q fever rickettsiae.

Thirty-three species of wildlife were sampled. Of these, the study of 14 species produced evidence of Q fever rickettsiae. Only 13 of the 33 species collected were obtained in numbers of more than 100 individuals during the entire 7-year period. Of these 13 more abundant species, positive tissues were found in individuals of 10. This indicates rather widespread distribution of Q fever among the more abundant wildlife populace. Species of mammals examined for Q fever rickettsiae are listed in Table 5.

Complement fixing (CF) antibodies against Q fever rickettsiae (Table 6) were first found in serum from a jack rabbit collected in 1954 on the southeast border of DPG. The following year Q fever antibodies were found in the same wildlife species collected from the same area. In 1956 none of the sera collected exhibited Q fever CF antibodies. In 1957, however, three new areas housed animals whose sera exhibited these antibodies. Two of these areas were the same as those from which Q fever positive wildlife tissues were recovered. The other was the Old River Bed region near the south border of DPG. In 1958, of 19 areas from which 10 or more animals were taken, 17 produced wildlife that contained sera with CF titers. Complement fixation titers were demonstrated in as many as 8 of 73 samples tested in some of these areas. In 1959, 20 of the 23 areas sampled had positive sera. Of the areas where a reasonable number of samples were taken (more than 10) Trout

TABLE 5. SPECIES WITH Q FEVER POSITIVE TISSUES. Wildlife species exhibiting Coxiella burnetii in their tissues. Data are expressed as the number positive over the number collected.

Species	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
<u>Lepus californicus</u>	0/163	0/410	0/546	1/353	1/213	2/442	8/372
<u>Sylvilagus nuttallii</u>		0/2	0/1		0/1		0/1
<u>S. audubonii</u>	0/6	0/5	0/5		0/7		2/35
<u>Citellus townsendii</u>		0/4					1/5
<u>C. variegatus</u>		0/1					0/2
<u>C. leucurus</u>	0/16	0/175	0/34	0/82	1/181	2/221	0/261
<u>Eutamias minimus</u>	0/9	0/14	0/16	0/19	0/44	0/47	1/23
<u>E. dorsalis</u>	0/6	0/17	0/1	0/3	9/11	0/20	0/34
<u>Thomomys bottae</u>				0/1	0/1		1/1
<u>Perognathus longimembris</u>	0/2	0/16	0/3	0/11	0/87	2/85	0/68
<u>P. parvus</u>	0/6	0/37	0/29	0/36	0/115	0/89	0/124
<u>P. formosus</u>	0/152	0/21	0/8	0/32	0/70	0/62	1/121
<u>Microdipodops megacephalus</u>				0/4	0/15	0/5	0/10
<u>Dipodomys ordii</u>	0/67	0/358	0/78	1/422	3/560	1/250	1/236
<u>D. microps</u>	0/42	0/107	0/114	4/235	3/361	4/249	16/339
<u>Reithrodontomys megalotis</u>	0/24	0/48	0/85	0/42	0/60	0/106	0/52
<u>Peromyscus crinitus</u>	0/105	0/45	0/32	0/42	0/40	0/80	0/27
<u>P. maniculatus</u>	0/74	2/607	0/894	0/396	0/693	0/611	1/1541
<u>P. truei</u>	0/7	0/25	0/19	0/12	0/27	1/134	0/73
<u>Onychomys leucogaster</u>	0/4	0/18		0/14	0/10	0/8	0/6
<u>Neotoma lepida</u>	0/45	0/104	0/49	0/71	3/86	0/46	0/53
<u>N. cinerea</u>				0/2	0/1	0/1	
<u>Ondatra zibethicus</u>			0/16			0/4	0/2
<u>Microtus montanus</u>		0/3					0/1
<u>Mus musculus</u>						0/3	
<u>Erethizon dorsatum</u>		0/2		0/4	0/3	1/2	0/1
<u>Canis latrans</u>							
<u>Vulpes macrotis</u>					0/2		
<u>Taxidea taxus</u>							
<u>Spilogale gracilis</u>			0/2	0/1	0/2		
<u>Lynx rufus</u>							
<u>Felis catus</u>						0/6	0/1
<u>Odocoileus hemionus</u>						0/10	
Total	0/728	2/2019	0/1392	6/1782	11/2860	13/2481	32/2389

TABLE 6. INCIDENCE OF Q FEVER POSITIVE SERA ACCORDING TO AREA. Areas from which wildlife specimens were collected that produced Q fever complement fixing antibody titers of 1:16 or higher. Shown as the number positive over the number collected.

Area	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Callao	0/0	0/50	0/235	0/168	4/94	39/371	34/152
Camelback Mountain		0/4	0/80		2/78	2/84	46/147
CD 22		0/2			4/86	1/20	15/67
Deep Creek	0/4			0/3	0/9	1/1	17/48
Dugway Mountain	0/5	0/1				0/18	13/57
Dugway Valley					8/73	3/53	6/30
Fish Springs	0/13	0/66	0/18	0/58	2/49	10/49	20/73
Gold Hill	0/8	0/74	0/161	0/165	4/139	23/154	21/102
Government Creek	1/7	1/46	0/67	0/87	13/221	39/262	37/179
Granite Mountain	0/68	0/5	0/3		0/29	0/36	10/48
Johnson Pass				0/17	2/72	15/107	0/2
Little Davis Mountain		0/89	0/53	0/154	3/97	8/100	20/60
Lookout Pass						2/45	8/77
North Skull Valley			0/75	0/29	8/217	12/125	48/133
Old River Bed			0/2	1/59	1/206	10/89	27/62
South Cedar Mountain	0/12	0/321	0/40	10/184	11/418	4/53	21/236
South Skull Valley		0/91	0/70	0/176	0/15	3/34	19/66
Test Grid	0/13	0/24	0/8	13/124	3/105	0/11	13/66
Trout Creek		0/4		0/4	1/12	10/42	71/217
Vernon		0/5			0/59	2/47	0/37
Wendover					16/436	57/299	47/229
Wig Mountain	0/27	0/76	0/164	0/45	2/31	2/92	14/58
Wildcat Mountain					1/24		3/38
Outlying areas						18/200	22/86
Totals	1/157	1/858	0/976	24/1273	85/2470	271/2292	532/2265

Creek, Fish Springs, and Wendover had the highest percentage of positive sera. These were 23.8%, 20.4% and 19.1%, respectively. These three areas have been used heavily for domestic grazing in excess of 75 years. In 1960, 21 of the 23 areas sampled exhibited Q fever CF antibodies in animal sera. In 19 of these areas, 20% or more of the serum samples were positive. The majority of these areas were in heavily grazed regions south of DPG, and to the west along the east bench of the Deep Creek Mountains, and north to Wendover.

Wildlife species showing CF antibodies against C. burnetii are listed in Table 7. All species that were obtained in numbers of 10 or more during the 7-year period, except Microdipodops megacephalus, had CF antibodies against Q fever rickettsiae.

Although experimental evidence presented in Section 1 of Results indicates titers as low as 1:16 may not be definitive, they are still used in the tables of this report for comparative purposes. Since the beginning of the project, titers of 1:16 or greater were arbitrarily set as indicative of Q fever infection. Therefore, in order to compare recent work with the original work, the contract requires the recording of titers in a similar manner.

Seven hundred seventy-four pools, composed of 41,215 ectoparasites, were studied from 1954 to 1957 for evidence of C. burnetii. Fleas, mites, and lice were negative, but two pools of ticks of the species Dermacentor parumapertus proved positive (Table 8). Data concerning Q fever organisms in ectoparasites collected since 1957 are shown in Table 9. In 1958 none of the pools contained these rickettsiae, but in 1959 two pools of fleas and one pool of mites produced evidence of the rickettsiae. In 1960 all of the groups of ectoparasites had some pools that were positive for Q fever organisms.

TABLE 7. SPECIES WITH Q FEVER POSITIVE SERA. Wildlife species possessing Q fever complement fixing antibodies of 1:16 or greater. Expressed as the number positive over the number collected.

Species	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
<u>Lepus californicus</u>	1/55	1/162	0/323	0/270	11/220	61/401	154/378
<u>Sylvilagus nuttallii</u>		0/0	0/1			1/5	0/1
<u>S. auduboni</u>		0/2	0/1		0/6	5/25	8/40
<u>Citellus townsendii</u>		0/2					0/4
<u>C. variegatus</u>		0/2					0/3
<u>C. leucurus</u>	0/2	0/99	0/19	1/55	3/192	7/198	17/245
<u>Eutamias minimus</u>	0/1	0/10		1/5	0/41	0/32	0/17
<u>E. dorsalis</u>	0/1	0/1			0/11	3/18	1/27
<u>Thomomys bottae</u>					1/1		1/1
<u>Perognathus longimembris</u>					1/41	2/64	8/58
<u>P. parvus</u>		0/10	0/5	0/12	0/73	15/74	10/113
<u>P. formosus</u>	0/44	0/5		0/15	1/60	1/57	1/110
<u>Microdipodops megalotus</u>				0/2	0/12	0/5	0/9
<u>Dipodomys ordii</u>	0/2	0/194	0/19	16/309	15/431	26/227	37/214
<u>D. microps</u>	0/9	0/66	0/53	5/167	24/550	20/229	122/327
<u>Reithrodontomys megalotis</u>			0/9	0/1	1/50	10/94	7/44
<u>Peromyscus crinitus</u>	0/21	0/20	0/8	0/33	0/31	3/75	7/24
<u>P. maniculatus</u>	0/18	0/207	0/493	0/324	25/662	98/577	126/499
<u>P. truei</u>		0/3	0/7	0/8	0/21	5/124	11/67
<u>Onychomys leucogaster</u>				1/5	1/8	1/6	1/6
<u>Neotoma lepida</u>	0/4	0/75	0/36	0/61	2/83	5/43	15/53
<u>N. cinerea</u>				0/2	0/1	0/1	
<u>Ondatra zibethicus</u>						0/1	
<u>Microtus montanus</u>						0/4	0/2
<u>Mus musculus</u>						0/1	1/1
<u>Erethizon dorsatum</u>				0/1	0/1		
<u>Canis latrans</u>	0/1	0/1	0/4			1/3	0/1
<u>Vulpes macrotis</u>					0/1		2/2
<u>Taxidea taxus</u>		0/1				0/4	
<u>Spilogale gracilis</u>					0/1		
<u>Lynx rufus</u>						0/3	
<u>Felis catus</u>						0/6	
<u>Odocoileus hemionus</u>					0/2	7/13	3/17
Totals	1/157	1/858	0/976	24/1273	85/2470	271/2292	532/2265

TABLE 8. Q FEVER IN ECTOPARASITES (1954 to 1957). Kinds and numbers of ectoparasites from native mammals tested for prevalence of Coxiella burnetii during 1954 through 1957.

Ectoparasite	Number tested	Pools tested	Pools containing <u>C. burnetii</u>
<u>Dermacentor parumapertus</u>	19,717	398	2
<u>Dermacentor</u> nymphs	5,111	130	0
Nymphs and larval ticks	3,972	27	0
Larval ticks	5,467	65	0
<u>Haemaphysalis leporis-palustris</u>	10	2	0
<u>Otobius lagophilus</u>	287	18	0
<u>Ixodes kingi</u>	5	2	0
<u>Dermacentor andersoni</u>	1	1	0
Fleas	2,709	67	0
Lice	2,491	43	0
Mites	1,445	21	0
Total	41,215	774	2

TABLE 9. Q FEVER IN ECTOPARASITES (1958 to 1960). Pools of four groups of ectoparasites that were tested for the presence of Q fever rickettsiae. Shown as the number of positives over the number of pools tested. The total number of ectoparasites is also listed.

Year	Fleas		Ticks		Mites		Lice	
	No.	Pos/Pools	No.	Pos/Pools	No.	Pos/Pools	No.	Pos/Pools
1958	2332	0/66	2673	0/68	1062	0/14	2620	0/40
1959	3220	2/100	4496	0/127	2122	1/52	1303	0/38
1960	3085	6/112	5699	9/184	1360	2/29	1665	1/38
Total	8637	9/278	12868	9/379	4544	3/95	5568	1/116

DISCUSSION

The first evidence of Q fever in local wildlife was obtained from seropositive jack rabbit serum collected near the southeast border of Dugway Proving Ground on Government Creek, shortly after the systematic sampling program was initiated in the fall of 1954. The following year another seropositive rabbit was collected from the same area. In addition, C. burnetii isolations were made from tissues of deer mice collected from Camelback Mountain to the west, and from Little Davis Mountain to the east of the site of the first seropositive collections. Q fever organisms were also isolated from a pool of rabbit ticks collected near the north end of Wig Mountain. In 1956 no evidence of Q fever was obtained from the 1,732 wildlife samples collected and tested. During 1957 evidence of Q fever antibodies was also found in two of these same areas, and in one additional area. In analyzing these data, Stoenner et al, (1959) state that during March, April and May of 1957, major epizootics apparently began, based on 30% positive titers in 75 serum samples collected during these months.

During 1958, 11 isolations were made from the tissues of 2,000 wildlife specimens. Eighty-five serum samples from this annual sample had complement fixing antibodies against C. burnetii. The following two years, although the total samples collected were around 400 less, both isolations from tissues and ectoparasites and Q fever complement fixing antibody titers increased.

The means by which Q fever is spread among rodents is unknown, although there is some indication that ticks may act as vectors since this organism has been isolated from them repeatedly. Ticks may also be natural reservoirs since they retain rickettsiae after an infective meal throughout their normal life span, However, in our laboratory, transmissions did not occur when infected ticks fed on normal hosts. Other ectoparasites may be incidentally infected, but probably play no major role in the epizootology of Q fever.

All the rodent hosts are highly susceptible to Q fever infection and retain significant complement fixing antibodies against Phase II antigen (egg-adapted) throughout their normal lives. Rodents also retain rickettsiae for some time after infection and may not be completely disregarded as significant carriers of the organism. It has not been shown experimentally, but there is a possibility that this organism, unlike tularemia, may be reservoired in native wildlife as a latent infection. Carnivores are not as susceptible as rodents and probably play a minor role in the epizootology of the disease through feeding on the infected rodents, or possibly contracting the organisms from infected vectors or infected dust.

Since Q fever is fairly widespread according to areas, and since ticks were not positively incriminated as efficient transmitters, while the rodents are highly susceptible to subcutaneous and aerosol infection, it is possible that Q fever may be transmitted among rodent populations without arthropod vectors. This may occur by animal to animal contact, infected dust, or even possibly through ingestion of infective flesh.

Even less well known than the wildlife epizootology of Q fever is the disease relationship of the wildlife and livestock that have inhabited the same areas in western Utah since 1875. Certainly one could expect a wildlife-domestic animal relationship, particularly during seasonal parturition on open range lands inhabited by both.

There is no reason to believe that Q fever was not present among mammalian populations of DPG prior to 1954. On the contrary, since Q fever has been noted as a disease of domestic animals in the United States, the infection would be expected among wildlife wherever sheep or other livestock are grazed for any length of time. Whether or not there is a wildlife reservoir of C. burnetii separate and apart from a livestock reservoir remains a moot question.

In light of these data there are at least three probable explanations of the distribution of Q fever:

1) The first is that this disease was enzootic in this area and did not reach increased proportions until 1957. Supporting this premise that Q fever is enzootic in the wildlife of the United States is an epizootological survey in Texas (Irons et al, 1952), in which CF antibodies for C. burnetii were reported in wood rats, Neotoma micropus; and in California, where Lechleitner (1959) reported serological titers in jack rabbits. This organism has been isolated from ticks that are commonly found on native animals throughout many areas of the United States. It is not surprising that it has been found in the wildlife of the United States, since Q fever has been reported in wildlife throughout many other areas of the world (Stoker and Marmion, 1955b). In fact, Perez et al, (1952) suggest that wild mice and rabbits are reservoirs of Q fever in Spain.

2) The second explanation is that the disease became artificially established in the test area some time prior to 1954 and spread rather rapidly in a susceptible wildlife population. The latter premise, however is discredited by Stoenner et al, (1959) since the strains isolated from wildlife differed from the experimental strains, and because the first isolations were in excess of 20 miles from field test areas.

3) The third premise is that wildlife infection resulted from infected livestock occupying the same habitat or range land over a long period of time. Supporting this premise is the locations of both the first positive wildlife samples and the areas exhibiting the greatest degree of infection. The former all occurred adjacent to sheep and cattle range or bedding areas,

just inside the fenced area of Dugway Proving Ground. The latter occurred for the most part some 40 miles to the west, in areas that have been heavily grazed with livestock for decades.

Since none of the premises can be completely validated in the light of the present data, further studies on the distribution and isolation of this organism should be pursued beyond the present known range of infection. Certainly isolation and characterization of strains outside this area would be a most logical approach to properly evaluate the foregoing question and would add appreciably to the meaning of the data. Studies on the disease relationships between wildlife and livestock should also be undertaken.

Regardless of which premises may prove most valid, the fact remains that Q fever is well established in the wildlife of this area. Since it is widely distributed, introduction by experimentation will probably not greatly alter the present epizootology. In fact, serological results indicate there may be a degree of immunity in wildlife, suggesting the incidence may soon subside, or is now subsiding.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Coxiella burnetii exists in the wildlife of the northwest part of the State of Utah.
2. The common native rodents were shown to be very susceptible to both parenteral inoculation and aerosol exposure.
3. The methods outlined in the protocol for this organization are satisfactory for determination of Q fever in wildlife, with the exception that only complement fixation titers of 1:32 or greater are reliable evidence of infection.
4. Native ticks readily became infected with C. burnetii when feeding on infected hosts, but transmission to healthy hosts was not demonstrated in our laboratory.
5. The first evidence of Q fever in wildlife and the highest infection rate occurred in specimens obtained near livestock grazing areas.
6. In some of the sampling areas, the abundance of animals showing CF antibodies may indicate that a degree of immunity may be developing in wildlife.
7. Q fever studies in the environs of Dugway Proving Ground will not alter the present epizootology of the disease.

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