

Vets' Tips for Fanciers

EDITED BY

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Preface

Authors, once finished with a book, instead of lying back in satisfaction and finally enjoying a moment of respite, set to work on a preface. On these occasions their worries all come out, and they go to some lengths to explain why they had to include as many things in the book as they did, while at the same time leaving out so much else, the little thoughts they were unable to express in black letters on the white page (or, in the case of more expensive publications, colour ones). Those of a more difficult persuasion will try to include in the preface everything that comes to their mind after the rest of the text has been finalized. I would like to spare the kind reader from both of these extremes.

Of course, it is easy for me to say this, as I am writing the preface to a book the large part of which I did not write myself. The idea, however, was mine: to ask a handful of world-renowned fancier veterinarians to join forces in writing a book about pigeon health care.

My colleagues did not need much persuading. Within weeks, Gordon Chalmers had sent the first material from Canada, and the rest followed in due course. It was interesting to see the consensus amongst veterinarians living in very different parts of the world on the most important issues, e.g. in their opinions on the role of antibiotics, on vaccinations, questions regarding moulting, etc. At the same time, thanks to different meteorological circumstances and local particularities, we can also observe a number of interesting differences, and the lessons drawn from these can be of use to fanciers everywhere. The same is true of the armoury of tips and tricks at the disposal of these experienced colleagues, many of which will be new to the reader.

All of the contributors have a good writing style, but there are naturally differences between these styles, which only serves to make this book more colourful and interesting. In the course of editing the text, Gordon Chalmers amazed with his extraordinarily wide-ranging knowledge, going well beyond the boundaries of pigeon health care, as did Wim Peters with his very precise and accurate wording, Colin Walker with his pleasantly musical

paragraphs framed with a confident lightness, and Pascal Lanneau with his words powered with youthful passion yet having much to say.

Five authors – five different styles. In editing these texts, in the interests of ease of use, I strived to give the book a unified yet unique design. I hope that I succeeded. The kind reader should not be surprised to find deliberately shocking sentences at the beginning or the end of the articles – these are my creations. Some of these may even appear provocative, but the intention of this is purely to raise awareness, emphasis important considerations, and make it easier to remember key points, given the significance of the issue.

Here I would like to express my gratitude to my friend David Robert Evans, the book's language editor, who calmly applied his Oxford precision to the improvement of a manuscript involving English as used in so many different points of the globe.

I am also indebted to my pigeon-fancier friend Szabolcs Kürtösi, many of whose wonderful photographs are to be found in the book. I would also like to thank Ad Schaerlaeckens for his great pictures. Many, many thanks also go to Steven van Breemen and the fanciers all over the world who submitted material for the book – whether this was included or not.

*

A few words about how to use the book.

This book was written in the popular Q&A (Question and Answer) format, thus allowing it to cover a wide variety of subjects. Despite this diversity, I would encourage the reader to treat the book as a single unit – for a great many things connect the questions it covers. The same is true of real life. In pigeon-keeping everything is interconnected, and so the successful fancier is the one who sees how breeding and what happens in the loft are connected. One of the main objectives of this book is to present these connections. If we can take the latest theories and apply them to our own loft, as well as using the right products in a professional manner, success will be within our grasp.

A circumspect reader may happen upon pieces of information or opinions that *appear* to contradict each other, e.g. with regard to the recommended timing or regularity of particular treatments. These differing recommendations are the product of differing circumstances: the length of races differs, as does the state of health of the pigeons, the weather varies, the quality of feed changes, and even the climate around us continues to change. The everyday management of the loft has continually to adapt to these developments. We know what is good for pigeons *in general*, but what they need *in reality* is often quite different.

We know that this is “all” that is needed for success. And it is with this that this book tries to provide assistance.

Dr. Zsolt Talaber

And now, let's get flying!



**The race starts. 200,000 pigeons, Orleans, Holland.
(From Ad Schaerlaeckens, Holland)**