

PREVALENCE AND INTENSITY OF SARCOSPORIDIA INFECTION IN WILD CLOVEN-HOOFED HUNTED FOR FOOD IN LITHUANIA

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Abstract. Recent investigations have shown that the intensity of Sarcocystis infection in game animals used for food is high and in some countries even exceeds 90%. Sarcosporidia found in the muscle tissue of domestic and wild animals pose a potential risk to humans. Therefore, their investigations are rather important. Infection with Sarcosporidia (*Sarcocystis* spp.) cysts was evaluated in the main species of wild animals used for food: elks (n = 27), red deer (n = 54), sika deer (n = 45), roe (n = 36), and wild boars (n = 127). Sarcocystis cysts were found in all examined groups of muscles: esophagus, diaphragm, heart, neck, mandible, dorsum and leg. Depending on the animal species and examined groups of muscles, the prevalence of infection, determined microscopically in 1,279 muscle samples by compression slide method using methylene blue as an indicator dye, ranged from 46.43% to 100.0%.

Keywords: meat, game animal, Sarcocystis, prevalence and intensity of infection