

Cyst-forming sporozoa in meats purchased from retail outlets.

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A variety of sporozoan parasites are known to form tissue cysts in the musculature of domestic animals. Transmission studies have shown that these cysts are infectious to carnivores, particularly dogs and cats, and occasionally humans. Several *Sarcocystis* spp. undergo enteric development in humans and *Toxoplasma gondii* may cause systemic infections. Little is known about the distribution and abundance of these parasites in Queensland therefore a survey was conducted to determine the prevalence and intensity of infections in lamb, beef and pork purchased from retail butchers. Histological sections were screened for the presence of parasitic cysts and *Sarcocystis* spp. were found to be most prevalent in sheep meat. Electron microscopic studies are being conducted to determine the ultrastructural characteristics of their primary cyst walls to facilitate their differential diagnosis. Fluorescent dyes are also being used to assess the viability of the cysts within the meat.