

A GUIDE FOR READERS

The Merck/Merial Manual for Pet Health is organized into sections and chapters. Understanding this organization will help the reader navigate through the book and find desired information. Topics of interest can be quickly located by reviewing the Table of Contents or Index.

■ SECTIONS

In the first portion of the book sections cover either basic information or the disorders of one species. Dogs, cats, and horses are treated in this way. The disorders within these sections are grouped by body system.

Following that is a section on birds and then one that includes fish, reptiles, amphibians, and a variety of other small or exotic animals. In this section, there is one chapter covering both basic information and disorders for each animal.

The final section covers a variety of special topics, such as travel with pets, emergencies, drugs and vaccines, poisoning, and the human-animal bond. Each section has its own detailed table of contents to assist in easily locating information.

■ CHAPTERS

Some chapters describe a single body system. Other chapters cover the diseases of an entire species. In either case, the discussion of a disorder usually begins with a definition of the disorder. The information that follows typically includes causes, signs, methods your veterinarian will use to diagnose the condition, treatment, and preventive techniques.

In the sections on dogs, cats, horses, and birds, early chapters describe the normal anatomy and physiology of the animals. These are followed by chapters on select-

ing and providing a home for the animal, routine care and feeding, and behavior.

■ CROSS-REFERENCES

Cross-references are located throughout the book. These identify other important discussions that are related to the original topic. Cross-references include the page and in some cases the subject title of the related information. Some cross-references point the reader to an illustration, sidebar, or table on a specific page.

■ GLOSSARY

In many cases the technical terms that are used by veterinarians to describe medical conditions and disorders are explained or defined in the text. In addition, such terms are also defined in the glossary at the back of the book. The definitions provided in the glossary are not necessarily complete; however, they represent the most frequent usage of the term in this book.

■ INDEX

The index is located at the back of the book and provides an easy way of locating a particular topic of interest. The index is very detailed and includes all specific diseases, disorders, and conditions discussed in the book, as well as many tests, treatments, and other pertinent topics. In many cases, the animal species affected is also identified.

■ ILLUSTRATIONS, SIDEBARS, AND TABLES

The book contains many illustrations, sidebars, and tables that have been developed specifically for this reference. They help explain or highlight material in the text or give additional, related information.