

*To the editor — Aan die redakteur*

## ***Mycobacterium* spp. in naturally infected game meat and organs**

I read the recent publication on *Mycobacterium* spp. in naturally infected game meat and organs with a great interest<sup>1</sup>. Van der Merwe and Michel studied several food preparation processes and concluded that ‘...these processes will kill *Mycobacterium bovis* but the unexpected recovery of non-tuberculous mycobacteria suggests possible survival and resistance characteristics of these strains which might be of veterinary public health interest.’ (p. 166) I would like to discuss this work. The question is about controlling the process of the food preparation. Proper management to prevent the food-borne disease in this case needs to be addressed. The

suggestion to avoid eating those meats might be possible but this is at variance with general practice in the local population. A study to find a proper food preparation technique to destroy the pathogen is called for. Indeed, the size and volume of the meat might affect the ability of cooking process to destroy the pathogen. Van der Merwe and Michel did not assess this factor in their article. Future work on this specific topic would be interesting.

1. Van der Merwe M, Michel A L 2010 An investigation of the effects of secondary processing on *Mycobacterium* spp. in naturally infected game meat and organs. *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 81: 166–169

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