

PYTHONS ARE NOT CATTLE!



According to the observations of Frédéric Stachurski, as exposed in his thesis, and a recent publication, individual cattle with a high load of the tick *Amblyomma variegatum* are less mobile, move and graze less, than more lightly infested individuals. According to French biologists Xavier Bonnet and Fabien Aubret, the opposite is true for the royal python (*Python regius*). They concluded from a study in Togo that males of this snake when sexually mature, carry more numerous ticks (species not indicated, presumably *Aponomma*

sp.) than females and immature males, because these males, actively mobile in search of females, meet more ticks on their way. In fact, the presence of numerous ticks on a male is an indication of sexual maturity, according to the biologists.

(Thanks to Anton van Woerkom. Seen in the Science and Medicine section of the French newspaper, Le Figaro, of 26th January 2001.)