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College of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine: National University of Buenos Aires

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THE GENERAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA IS QUITE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA IN ITS BASIC PLANS. TO UNDERSTAND THEM BETTER IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE SPANISH ORIGIN OF THESE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE SPECIAL LATIN FEELING OF THE LIFE THAT IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF SOMEBODY IS INTERESTED IN COMPARISONS BETWEEN THESE SYSTEMS AND THAT OF THE UNITED STATES, IT CAN BE READ IN A FAIRLY GOOD APPRECIATION WRITTEN IN THE IOWA STATE SCIENTIST, VOL. 3, NO. 3, NOV. 1954.

RECENTLY, THE PRESENT ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCING ITS OWN POLICY IN EDUCATION, AND HAS DIVERSIFIED THE INSTRUCTION. DIVERSIFICATION MAKES ARGENTINE EDUCATION MORE SIMILAR TO THE UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

IN ARGENTINA, SCHOOLS ARE PRIVATE OR STATE OWNED. THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS DEAL ESPECIALLY WITH THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES) WHILE STATE SCHOOLS HAVE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY LEVEL. PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE THE SAME CURRICULUM AS THAT OF THE STATE OWNED SCHOOLS. THEY ARE ALSO SUPERVISED BY THE GOVERNMENT. WHILE PRIVATE SCHOOLS CHARGE FEES TO THE STUDENTS, THE STATE OWNED ARE FREE AND SUPPORTED BY A SPECIAL FEDERAL TAX. THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BELONGS TO THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH CONFER THE RECOGNIZED DEGREES. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL UNDER THE CATHOLIC SPONSORSHIP GRANTING DEGREES THAT AUTHORIZE GRADUATES TO TEACH IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS ONLY.

**Primary schools**

AN AVERAGE OF 95 PER CENT OF OUR CHILDREN OF 6 YEARS OF AGE AND UP ATTEND PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR A PERIOD OF 7 YEARS BEFORE ENTERING SECONDARY SCHOOL (HIGH SCHOOL). HERE THEY LEARN LANGUAGE; THE BASIS OF MATHEMATICS; GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ARGENTINA; ELEMENTS OF PLANTS AND ANIMAL BIOLOGY; RELIGION OR MORAL; SOME ARTS AS DRAWING, MODELING AND MUSIC; MANUAL SKILLS SUCH AS CARPENTRY, SEWING AND BOOK REPAIRING; AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

**Secondary schools**

WE HAVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THERE ARE BACCALAUREATE, TEACHER'S SCHOOLS, TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS, SCHOOL-FACTORIES, MILITARY LICEUMS, AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS, AND OTHERS LESS ATTENDED.

THEY COVER A PERIOD OF 5 YEARS OR LONGER AND PREPARE THE STUDENT WITH A WIDE AND COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL CULTURE. IN THE FIRST 3 YEARS OF THIS PERIOD MOST OF THEM HAVE THE SAME PLAN, BUT THEY DIFFER IN THE LAST 2 YEARS, IN WHICH THE STUDENT IS INSTRUCTED IN THE BASIC SUBJECTS OF HIS FUTURE FIELD. LECTURES ARE GIVEN DUR-
ing the scholastic year of 9 months, which is divided into three quarters with classifications (tests) at the end of each quarter.

The secondary student has no final examinations. The promotion is decided by the average of the three classifications, one given at the end of each quarter. These are scored from 0 to 10. One must be above 7 in each subject. If the student fails to do so, he will take examinations of proficiency.

**University system**

The seven different universities, adapted to the seven main regions of the country, are divided into several faculties (divisions) located in different places, in which they teach different scientific fields. A few of these faculties are all together in a community called "University City" (campus town). This is the environment of study considered most adequate and on which we have to build our new universities.

In case the student intends to enroll in one of the three veterinary schools of the country, Buenos Aires, Eva Peron (ex-La Plata) or Corrientes, he is required to have finished his baccalaureate, the military liceum, or the agricultural school.

The Agronomy and Veterinary Faculty of the University of Buenos Aires was the second of its kind founded in our country in 1904, and it was on the basis of the pre-existent Institute of Agriculture "Santa Catalina". It was settled in the surroundings of Buenos Aires in a famous place for the students holidays at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, the school is in the geographical center of the city. What could seem a strange delay in the establishment of such an institution in a cattle rearing country as Argentina has a natural explanation. During the last century, extremely rich lands have been supporting large numbers of cattle in a natural way without any kind of care, and the profits of cattle farming were very low.

In the beginning most of our professors came from Europe, whose most prominent veterinary schools have been taken as patterns. We have had among those pioneers names such as Lignieres, Ameghino, Wernicke, Bossi, and Van de Pas, just to mention a few of them. It is amazing to review the huge development that the school has had in the first 40 years.

**The Campus and Departments**

In 1950 the campus had about 54 hectares (100 acres). Today, it has been diminished in size. It is now surrounded by wide avenues with good means of transportation in all directions, and also crossed by an electric railroad with two stations at either side of the campus. Well wooded avenues connect the 18 departments of the faculty with the central building. This contains the dean's offices, the main auditorium with the cafeteria in the basement at one side, and a complete library with the current library (loan desk) on the other side.

On the main avenue, near the entrance of the campus, there is the small animal clinic building. The large animal clinic is located at the back of the former and separated by an avenue. Patients are received and treated free of charge in both of these buildings. Small animal medicine, pharmacology, semiology, and medi-
cal pathology are taught in the small animal clinic. Surgical techniques, pathological surgery, and obstetrics with pathology of the reproductive system are taught in the large animal clinic. An annex to this building contains the radiology equipment. However, radiology is not a separate department and is taught in conjunction with physics, chemistry, and clinics.

On the same avenue toward the east, there is the Histology (with Embryology) and Physiology Departments in one building, with the barns of experimental dogs and goats at one side. Farther on the avenue there is the building of infectious diseases with its barns and a research annex. Here the student learns bacteriology, immunology and clinical analysis, bromatology (food inspection), and pathological anatomy (pathology).

Westward on the same avenue, and somewhat apart from the rest of the buildings, is the Parasitology Department with its own laboratory, museum and barns.

The Department of Anatomy is located at the back of the campus behind the railroad. The department has a well-stocked museum and a large dissection room. The Agronomy Departments are located in this part of the campus, too. This School covers a field broader in scope than the agronomy departments in the United States. Zootechny (Animal Husbandry) is taken in both Schools over a period of 3 years. Other courses taught are physics, chemistry, zoology, genetics and biometry (biological statistics), poisonous plants, agrostology (grass and pastures), rural legislation (veterinary police), aquatic fauna (fishes and marine mammals), farm management, rural economy, rural administration and accounting, milk and derived products and meat and derived products.

Development of the Activities

All of the veterinary background is developed during 5 years in the veterinary curriculum. Most of the courses are taught on an 8-month basis. Anatomy is taught in two 8-month sessions; physics and chemistry, four months. The student has 3 or 4 hours of lecture in all courses each week. Some courses require laboratory work once or twice a week. Most of the classes are held during the mornings from 8 to 12 every day except Sundays. The laboratory classes meet from 2 to 5 p.m. three or four times a week.

Lectures are usually given by the professor and head of the department. Occasionally an assistant professor gives the lecture. It is possible to ask questions during or after the conferences. The students take notes depending upon the existence of textbooks or outlines about that subject, how the students appreciate the professor, or the demands of the professor in the final examinations.

The laboratory work is directed by instructors assisted by laborers who restrain the animals, prepare and wash the instruments, and do the black-smith work.

Attendance to the lectures is optional, but it is compulsory to the laboratory.

Most of the clinical work in large animals is done on horses. This is a result of the long distance from the farms (from which we obtain cattle, sheep and swine) to the campus, and the fact that people from Buenos Aires are very fond of race horses. Those reasons, together with an
infrequent ambulatory clinic, means that the student wanting to have some practice in cattle, swine or sheep, must apply to the Social Extension Office for a stay on private “Estancias” (ranches or farms) during the vacation periods of the last 2 years.

Extra practice in fields such as bacteriology and clinical analysis can be done in time-out-of-schedule in some departments or in paid services of a few hours fitted to the student needs in private or official laboratories. Another way to increase the practical training is to obtain temporary jobs in slaughter houses for several weeks or months, to visit factories, or to make trips for 1 or 2 weeks to the interior of the country. Free means of transportation are provided by the faculty to move from one department to another inside the campus or in trips outside.

To evaluate the knowledge acquired by the students, there are three or four partial tests in the year, but only in the basic subjects. In addition to this, some instructors make oral questions at the end of the laboratory work. However, the most important decision for the promotion to the next year is taken in the final examination of each subject which is oral and public. It can be taken by the student during the examination period he prefers. Examinations are given at intervals throughout the year. In this way he has the chance to give the subjects a general review before the examination.

Grades are given as outstanding, distinguished, good, approved, or failing. There are also some distinctions in the final ceremony for those students with a distinguished average. This ceremony is a great event held every 2 years. The graduate is granted the degree of Veterinary Physician, or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine if he has written a thesis in an original field of research.

The Faculty Staff

If the veterinarian wishes to enter in the faculty staff, he will be requested to do another piece of research. After 2 years or more he may be chosen among competitors as assistant professor. Two years more, with about the same procedures, and he may be chosen as associate professor, if he is needed. The professor and head of the department is chosen from the associate professors according to their antecedents.

The direction of the faculty is under the authority of a council of 10 members: 4 professors and 1 good non-voting student from each school. This council is presided by the dean, vice-dean, and the secretary. All of them except the secretary are removed every 2 years. The dean is chosen alternately from the staff of the Agronomy School and the Veterinary School. All of them are under the authority of the University Council composed of the deans of the faculties and presided by the rector who is under the direction of the Federal Government.

Besides the specific teaching mission, the faculty has a sports department that sponsors intramural activities on the faculty intramural field. It also connects the faculty with the annual inter-university olympiads, attended mostly by students of the first years.

Places of relaxation inside the campus have been provided by the students themselves in seldom occupied rooms of some buildings.

Community life does not exist in our faculty. There are no dormitories, no social events, no student clubs, and no meetings. The beginning of community life — the independent or associate student center — have disappeared or have been replaced by official centers. There are no full-time professors and on the other hand a good proportion of the students work on distant places of the campus and cannot spend all their time in the faculty. These are other reasons for the absence of community life.

By the way of conclusion, we, all the Argentine veterinary family, professors, practitioners and fellow students recognize that our school has greatly contributed to the development of our animal industry; however, a renovation is heartily expected that could fit more efficiently to our present conditions and better fill our future necessities.

Iowa State College Veterinarian