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Veterinary Medicine in Chile

Bachelor's degree a prerequisite to five-year veterinary course

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The story of Chilean Veterinary Medicine is long and has a history which makes it difficult to give a clear idea of the veterinary profession up to 1925. The veterinarian in the early history of Chile was exclusively a "Therapeut" or "quack," and his social position was very low. His position was partly justified due to his limited knowledge and the lack of recognition of the profession's social and economic importance. The general welfare of the country was such that it was uneconomical to care for the health of the cattle.

Veterinarians For Army

The first veterinary school was established about 1890. The necessity of a Veterinary division as part of the army was brought out by the "War of the Pacific" between Peru-Bolivia and Chile. This school in its early stages can be considered a graft of European Veterinary Medicine transplanted to an adverse and indifferent atmosphere. A teaching staff from Germany and France was especially engaged. The principal object of this school was to educate as quickly as possible non-commissioned officers who would be able to care for the army horses and protect the cattle of the country in cases of emergency.

At first the number of subjects taught was limited and after two years of study the degree of veterinary sergeant was granted. The first professionals to complete this course were given the disrespectful name of "vetes" by society. Later, in about 1906, the economic importance of this new profession was recognized. The course of study was lengthened to three years and the rank of the graduates was raised to that of second lieutenant.

During the following years this profession developed slowly but made definite progress. The various plagues which greatly reduced the number of cattle were a factor in demonstrating to the government the necessity of applying veterinary techniques on a larger scale for the welfare of national agriculture. As a result the veterinary school was transferred from the army to the Department of Agriculture in 1917. In 1925 the school was again transferred; this time to the state university of Chile, Universidad de Chile, as a department of the agricultural school. The course was lengthened to four years with a bachelor's degree required for registration, the same as for any other university course. The degree of Veterinary Medicine was granted to the graduates.

In 1937 the veterinary school was removed from the agricultural school and became an independent school of veterinary medicine. The course of today requires five years of study and the profession now occupies a position similar to that of a doctor of medicine.

Entrance Requirements

The requirements necessary to obtain the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine are six years of primary education, six years of secondary education, and a secondary license. A bachelor's degree in a field related to the veterinary profession is also a requirement. This degree is obtainable after passing a special examina-
tion following the secondary studies. After these preliminary courses are completed, five years of veterinary medicine are studied to obtain the degree.

The following courses are included in the program of study. The courses making up the first year of study are anatomy 1st part, embryology and genetics, biology, medical chemistry, physics, botany, and external morphology. Anatomy 2nd part, physiology, biological chemistry, histology, general parasitology, general zootchnics, and therapeutics 1st part are studied during the second year. The third year courses include parasitology, pharmacology, general pathology, pathological anatomy 1st part, nutrition, and propedeutics. Infectious and parasitic diseases, rural hygiene, internal pathology, surgery and clinics, special zootchnic, meat inspection 1st part, and toxicology make up the fourth year of work. Ornithopathology, obstetrics, clinics and surgery, veterinary legislation, meat inspection 2nd part, podopathology, and horseshoeing complete the final year of the veterinary curriculum.

School Year Around

School is in session the entire year. At the end of the year, the students must take a written and oral examination over the courses just completed. When the entire course has been completed the candidates for the veterinary degree receive a license with which they are able to practice for one and one-half years. This period is usually used for the preparation and writing of a thesis which is required for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. If the thesis is accepted by the committee in charge, the candidate has to pass a practical examination showing his professional ability, followed by an oral examination covering all the courses studied.

The student enrollment is limited and fluctuates because of the prerequisite requirements and the careful selection of those entering the veterinary school. The total number enrolled is between 100 and 120 students and approximately 10 to 12 receive the Doctor’s degree annually.

The Chilean Doctor of Veterinary Medicine has a strong conviction that his field of activity is wide and should include that of animal husbandry. For several years he has been fighting and keeps fighting for his rights in this field by showing that he is able to solve a clinic or hygienic problem as well as a breeding problem. His strong biologic basis and the exact knowledge of the animal body, normal or pathologic, qualifies the veterinarian for this undertaking. To more efficiently serve in this capacity the veterinary profession is including more actual studies in the animal husbandry and dairy husbandry fields.

Veterinary Shortage

There are approximately 200 veterinarians in Chile, which is too small a number to take care of the necessities of the country. Many of these have positions as veterinarians in the army and mounted police. The Department of Agriculture, which regulates cattle sanitation and disease control and supervises the inspection of customs, markets, milk, and meats, also employs a number of veterinarians. Other veterinarians have a private practice in addition to a position on stock farms or with companies using large numbers of work horses.

The Chilean Veterinary Medical Society is an organization which was founded to bring the professionals together and to advise, stimulate, and guide the veterinarian on the road of progress. It compares on a smaller scale with the American Veterinary Medical Association. Further professional advancement has been brought about by pharmaceutical companies which manufacture all kinds of products. They produce enough serum, vaccine, and other therapeutic products to fill the requirements of Chile and a few neighboring countries. Several veterinary laboratories are maintained by the government to furnish the federal veterinarians with the needed therapeutic products.

Legislative Aid

Existing legislation is aiding the veterinarian in a steady fight against enzootic and epizootic diseases, thus eliminating heavy losses of cattle caused by anthrax, blackleg, pneumoenteritis, and

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determinations of the prothrombin and coagulation times were made before, during, and after administration. 

Butsch and Stewart \(^1\) suggested 300 mg. on two successive days as the basic dosage for prophylactic oral use. They reported the physiologic effect from this dosage should last about four weeks.

The Abbott Laboratories, Mayo Foundation, and Columbia University have been leaders in the investigation of dicoumarin and its clinical application. Either oral or intravenous methods of administration may be used. Latent periods of from twenty-four to forty-eight hours are always observed in oral administration. The advantages of administration directly into the circulatory system are the control of absorption and a more exact blood concentration.

Clinical case reports following the use of dicoumarin are favorable in such conditions as pulmonary thrombosis, thrombophlebitis, and postoperative embolism.

Research by Allen, Barker, and Waugh \(^2\) indicates that heparin and dicoumarin can be successfully used together, giving a quick and more prolonged action. Vitamin K apparently has no effect on the lowered prothrombin level resulting from the administration of dicoumarin.

Doubtless there will be many case reports published in the near future dealing with the effects of this new therapeutic product. Present indications are that it has great clinical possibilities.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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hog cholera. Foot and mouth disease, brucellosis, and tuberculosis cause the greatest losses at the present time in the cattle industry. With the foot and mouth disease vaccine, which is beginning to be manufactured in Chile, it is hoped that this disease can soon be eradicated. The vaccine was developed by Waldmann and Koebe in 1938, and its efficiency was partly proved in Europe before World War II. Brucellosis will also be reduced to some extent when calfhood vaccination has been more completely developed. Tuberculosis as well as infectious abortion has been eliminated at this time from all purebred stock by semi-annual testing and the elimination of the positive reactors from the herdbooks.

We feel justified in thinking that our veterinary medical school is one of the best in South America. Its influence has extended all along the Pacific coast and in these countries there are veterinarians who acquired their degrees in Chile and at the present time occupy important positions in the departments of hygiene and animal production.

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