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Postwar Planning III

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THE possibility of considerable economic readjustment as it affects the livestock industry must be considered in postwar planning. Since the veterinarian guards the health of the livestock population, he must meet the challenge for service demanded by livestock industry.

The profession, in outlining a future program to protect animals from disease, might stop and survey veterinary activities to see if it now adequately covers the field. The postwar planning committee of the A.V.M.A. believes that a community, to be properly cared for, must have complete veterinary service available. There must be someone to direct the program for the health of swine, beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, sheep, poultry, small animals and fur bearing animals. There must be someone to assist in activities such as artificial insemination, meat and milk inspection and sale barn supervision.

**Situation in Iowa**

The state of Iowa has the greatest livestock population and the greatest number of veterinarians of any state and it is thought by many to have the most efficient coverage by veterinarians. A recent survey of the 99 counties, made by a selected committee, indicated that no county has a complete veterinary service available as outlined above. Many of the counties were reported to have access to very good veterinary aid, but a surprising number of counties had only a very limited amount of service offered to the livestock owner. The report further showed the average age of practicing veterinarians to be 54 years. Many of these men were definitely limiting their practices for one reason or another. Therefore in such communities only a limited amount of veterinary service was available.

**Changing Methods**

It was also found that in too many instances the methods of conducting a practice had changed little during the past 30 years. Only a few veterinarians were attempting to do any laboratory work in their offices. Many practices were conducted without offices, bookkeeping systems or case records. Few libraries of professional books were found and many practitioners read no journals except "house organs" of commercial companies. The survey also showed that in communities where the veterinary service was the most limited, feed dealers, drug stores and peddlers sold the greatest volume of serums and proprietary drugs direct to farmers.

It is very definite from this report that there is need for improvement of practice methods so the field of veterinary medicine may broaden its usefulness. Many veterinarians, as indicated from replies to postwar planning questionnaires, have long recognized many of these faults of practice, and they have offered valuable suggestions for consideration. No one man could possibly have the time or knowledge to give efficient service in all lines of endeavor. This is very likely the reason why many practitioners were found to have
limited their scope of activity leading to specialization.

New fields are opened each time science presents a new project to the world. The new fields which pertain to disease control should interest the veterinary profession. The practitioner should spend much time determining how to best handle these projects for both his good and the good of the animal owner. If he is not equipped to render this service somebody is going to do it and he may not like the way it is done.

There are two ways that special veterinary activities may be handled. They may be handled as a part of a practice or they may be handled by a veterinarian who spends full time in that particular field. For the good of veterinary medicine it is best that these projects be handled in the practice. Examples of the desirability of handling these projects in connection with a practice are the tuberculosis and Bang's disease control work. This, of course, means broadening the scope of practice.

Group Practice

Several suggestions received were to the effect that it would be much better to broaden a practice instead of limiting it. Broadening a practice, of course, means adding additional personnel to the organization, thus giving an opportunity for the formation of a clinic or group practice. It would seem that there are many advantages to such an organization. Someone would always be available to render assistance to the livestock owner. All branches of practice could be adequately serviced. For instance, in a three man group, one veterinarian would be responsible for swine, horse and sheep ailments; another would take care of the cattle disease problems and satisfy the demands for artificial insemination. The third man would care for small animals, poultry and supervise milk and meat inspection. Such a group could well afford to maintain a well-equipped office, install a system of bookkeeping, keep case reports and maintain a laboratory.

Travel and highways are continually being improved and it is now possible for a veterinary office to care for a wider area than in the days of mud roads. Group practice would not mean a greater number of veterinarians, but rather a concentration of the same number into groups of two or three. Group practice would be good insurance against the lay-vaccinator, the lay-inseminator, the drug peddler and the poultry remedy man. Where there is livestock, there are disease problems, and if the veterinarian is not sufficiently equipped to care for these problems, some unqualified individual is going to step in and attempt to do it.

New Veterinary Schools

A School of Veterinary Medicine at Davis will be established by the University of California as soon as construction can be undertaken. On recommendation of Dean C. B. Hutchinson, of the College of Agriculture, an appropriation of $500,000 has been made by the Legislature for the new school, and an additional $500,000 is expected from the postwar building funds provided by the Legislature. The department will be set up in the College of Agriculture, coordinated with the departments of agriculture, forestry and home economics. The faculty of the school will be drawn not only from the department of veterinary science, but from other departments, including the department of agriculture and the Medical School.

The Illinois Commission on Higher Educational Facilities is at present engaged in the study of the need for an additional college of veterinary medicine which, if established, would be a part of the Illinois State University at Urbana. The question of primary consideration in the survey now being conducted is whether or not there is need for another such college in the middle west. Recently, a special committee of the university faculty spent a day at Iowa State College visiting the various departments of the Veterinary Division and Veterinary Research Institute looking over the physical facilities necessary for carrying out a modern program of veterinary education.