

Veterinary health care system

Dr. K.P. Jacob,
General Secretary,
Animal Husbandry
Officers Association,
Kerala

The existing infrastructure in Animal Husbandry Department, both in Veterinary Health Care and Extension service deters the pace of development. The need of the hour is a radical change facilitating a thorough restructuring, imbibing modern trends in concerned areas.

The present set up of Veterinary Institutions is highly deplorable. The buildings where the Veterinary Institutions are lodged often do not have the bare minimum facilities. The instruments and other equipments supplied date back to fifties or sixties. The day to day work is carried out smoothly with the instruments bought from the personal account of the veterinarian.

Treatment is done still on primitive line though we are in the threshold of entering the twenty first century. In the sphere of prevention and control of communicable diseases also we are lagging behind.

Extension service aims at educating the farmers on the latest trends in management practices and thereby increasing the productivity. For example farmers know that deworming should be done but often they don't have the idea of when to do. Like wise lots remain to be disseminated. I am afraid that the term "Extension" is misconceived

now and centres around implementing Government schemes only. The mission of imparting Veterinary Health Care can be made fool proof with the help of extension service only.

Now a vet in charge of Veterinary Health Service is entrusted with implementation of schemes and other extension activities in his area. This often results in curtailing the right of the farmer in getting quality Veterinary Health Service in time since the vet will have to go after schemes and other extension activities.

The sole responsibility and obligation of a veterinary officer officiating a veterinary hospital/dispensary should be looking after the veterinary health service in his jurisdiction. It is suggested to establish Block level Extension wing with Veterinarians. They will look after the extension activities and implementation of schemes within their area. Extension activities should be brought under the control of a separate wing headed by an Additional Director.

Disease Control Measures

Diseases control has an indisputable say in veterinary health care. No body will have a second opinion to the fact that "Mastitis" in cows inducing marginal loss to cattle farmers can be controlled to a large extent by resorting to control measures like scientific milking, educating the milker, adopting Teat Dipping, etc. Extension service Division has the active role in this task. The clinical laboratories should be well equipped with facility for culture and sensitivity examinations.

Disease Free Zone:

Bacterial and viral diseases that put the farmers in doldrums need be limited or nullified with periodic vaccinations. The role played by Livestock Disease Control Unit is to be extended to all parts of the state.

Emerging diseases often pose stiff challenges to Veterinarians, at times question the integrity of the profession even. To combat and excel in such situations we should have fully charged team of experts with laboratory facilities having sophisticated instruments.

This can be achieved by strengthening Chief Disease Investigation Office at Palode and by starting regional centres in the northern districts.

Training Centres.

Extension service has an important role if not tantamount to the Veterinary Health Care service. The quality of Veterinary Health Care can be improved by giving training in latest trends in treatment, to face new challenges in the field, to update the knowledge and technical know-how of Veterinarians. The farmers can be taught to follow the advanced management practices in livestock rearing, minimize the risk of contagious and infectious diseases, about feeding practices and thus exploit the production potential to the maximum. In the changed scenario of administration, the Panchayath Raj, planning at grass root level has an important role. The veterinary officers should be attuned to cope with the preparation of schemes. Veterinarians have the skill and brains but feared whether they show the required commitment in extension activities. Training centres will help them in proving their mettle in this field. To ensure a uniform distribution of extension service through out the State, training Centres should be started in each district.

Modern Trends in veterinary practice means advances in diagnosis, sur-

gery, infertility management and veterinary research.

Trends in diagnosis:- In animal practice the following diagnostic facilities can be made use of

1. Angiograms
2. Ultrasound scanning.
3. Echocardiogram
4. Troponin T Test to detect the Troponin present in blood in myocardial infarction
5. E.C.G.
6. Endoscopy to detect G.I. tract abnormalities.

Surgery

We have to go a long way in small animal and large animal surgery. (The developments like intramedullary pinning, plating in bone fracture.) Traumatic pericarditis in cattle can be operated upon after confirmation with a metal detector. As in human beings we can perform open heart surgery for valve replacement, coronary artery by-pass grafting (CABG) using mammary artery or saphenous vein in multiple coronary artery block. Cosmetic surgery is getting popularity in these days especially in pets. Ear clipping, ear cropping and to correct congenital anomalies we resort to cosmetic surgery. Specialized training for this should be imparted to those interested.

Infertility Clinics should be started in all District Veterinary Centres with facility for hormonal assay.

Veterinary Research

Research in the field of Veterinary Health Service has to be oriented to face emerging challenges.

The dawn of a new century is on the anvil. Medicine and surgery is advancing by leaps and bounds. Let us strive hard to practise them in Veterinary Health Care too.

