



Original Contribution

**THE SOCIALIZATION OF VETERINARY SERVICE – NECESSITY AND
POSSIBILITIES**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of this article is to analyze the necessity for socialization of veterinary medicine service and to reveal some possible decisions for it.

The development of market forms of production and animal trade with the participation of a big number of subjects – farmers, companies, cooperatives and processing enterprises undoubtedly creates problems during their coverage by veterinary control. The veterinary medicine service requires more efforts, but it is of big importance for animal and human's health services as for realization of international contracts, respectively those to EU.

In all reconstructing economies of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe, there is a dualistic structure of the agriculture. On the one hand this structure is characterized by a small number of big production enterprises and, on the other hand by a big number of average and small enterprises. The small scale companies are not ready for the market requirements. They do not possess enough knowledge for agriculture, especially for animal husbandry and veterinary medicine service of animals. In order to reach the aim, we use historical and monographic methods, analysis and synthesis.

Key words: Dualistic structure, animal husbandry, market economy

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is a branch whose production satisfies the needs of the human population for vital and essential foodstuffs and at the same time influences the development of other branches of economy (1-8).

Agriculture occupies 11 to 18% of the gross national product in Bulgarian economy, and the share of animal husbandry is from 35 to 50% of the agricultural production in the recent years.

Serious structural changes were made in the national economy during the last decade – from central planning to market economy. This period of transition is characterized by the following features: fragmentation of the land property, liquidation of the co-operative farms, privatization of the big animal husbandry complexes, drop in the agrarian production, especially in the field of animal production, as being more labour-consuming. The development of the market forms of production and trade of animals and animal products with a number of participants –

farmers, associations, processing enterprises – undoubtedly creates problems as far as their veterinary control is concerned. Veterinary service needs more efforts, but is very important for the health of animals and people, as well as for the international obligations of our country and namely those towards the European Union.

The aim of the present paper is to analyze the necessity of socialization of the veterinary service and to reveal several possible ways to do this.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve this aim the following methods were used: historical method, monographic observations, analysis and synthesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the transitional period the state granted economic freedom to the commodity producers, so they could organize the production and the selling of their commodities by themselves. But in the sphere of the agricultural production the objective conditions for this freedom did not exist – the necessary buildings and equipment were destroyed, there was no foreign market, the

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privatization of the producing structures was not well planned and the interrelations between the various branches of the national economy were impaired. This period was especially unfavourable for animal

production. The number of the animals of all kinds marked a drastic drop. Data about this tendency can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of agricultural animals by January 2001 (in thousands)

Types of animals	1990	1994	Times of reduction compared to 1990	1997	2001	Times of reduction compared to 1990
Cattle, including cows	1575	750	2,1	582	634	2,48
	617	419	1,47	358	419	1,47
Buffaloes, including buffalo-cows	23	17	1,35	11	8	2,87
	11	10	1,1	7	5	2,2
Swine, including sows	4331	2071	2,09	1500	1144	3,78
	381	198	1,92	157	137	2,78
Sheep, including ewes	8130	3763	2,16	3020	2286	3,55
	5007	2839	1,76	2000	1758	2,84
Poultry	36338	18211	1,98	16227	14991	2,42
Bee families	615	338	1,81	266	349,5	1,76

The drop in the total number, arranged by species, is as follows (Stankov, Iv. et al): cattle – 52.4%; sheep – 53.7%; swine – 52.2%; poultry – 49.9%; bee families – 45%. The tendency for reduction is also present for the dams, and it is 32.1% for the cows, 43.3% for the ewes and 48% for the sows, respectively. The reduction of the number of the animals brought about, naturally, to a drop in the animal production as well.

We can observe the existence of dual structure of the agricultural field in all the economies undergoing restructuring in the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe. This structure is characterized by a small number of big production enterprises on the one hand, and a big number of medium and small enterprises, on the other. According to a research made in 2001 about the agricultural enterprises in Bulgaria, 768 800 enterprises own 3.436 mln ha of the total area (the information is obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, department of Agro statistics). From these, 763 500 are small family enterprises and they keep 0.880 mln ha of land with the medium size of the farm being 1.2 ha. These farms cultivate only about 15 to 16% of the usable agricultural area, but again according to the same information source, they raise about 70% of the cattle, over 95% of the sheep, and over half the swine in the country.

The analysis of the bibliographical sources revealed the following situation:

Cattle breeding: According to Yarkova, Yu., in 2000 the farms with 1 to 3 cows had the biggest relative share (61.2%); with 4 to 10 cows were 7.4%; with 10 to 29 cows were 7.8%; with 30 to 69 cows were 10.9% and with over 70 cows were 12.6%. The medium size of the herds was 2.71% cattle and 1.58% cows.

Sheep breeding: According to data from the National Statistical Institute for 1995 only 1% of the farms raised over 50 – 100 sheep; 11.3% raised 11 – 50 sheep; and the rest 87.7% raised up to 10 sheep. At present about 99% of the sheep are raised in small farms, and they produce 99.5% of the mutton and 98.8% of the raw wool.

Pig rearing: By 2000 this field was completely privatized and only in 145 farms over 30 sows were reared, and in the rest 382 585 farms 1 to 2 sows were reared, which accounts for 86.5%; 9% reared 3 to 5 sows; 2.6% reared 6 to 10 sows and about 2% reared from 11 to 25 sows (Stoykov, Al. et al).

Poultry: According to statistical data in 2000 about 2/3 of the layers were raised in small family farms. These farms produced about ½ of the total quantity of eggs and about 60% of the poultry meat.

The above-mentioned data, concerning the most important agricultural sub-branches, characterize the farms producing animals and animal products as small natural economies. The markedly dual structure in the

agriculture has a strong influence on the veterinary service of the animals and the veterinary control on the animal products. The small producers are not prepared for the requirements of the market, do not have enough knowledge in animal breeding and the necessary veterinary care for them.

The small animal- producing farms have limited financial resources and cannot fulfill some obligatory veterinary measures that guarantee health protection both for the animals and the people. According to the Law for Veterinary Activities from 1999 some immunoprophylactic measures (vaccinations – as in leptospirosis in cattle, in erysipelas in swine and so on) and diagnostic tests that must be carried out because of the nature of the disease, have to be paid by the owners of the animals. The aim of these activities is to fight the infectious diseases of the animals in the country and to prevent the entrance of epizootic diseases from abroad. The technology of fighting these diseases, and especially the zoonothroponoses, which are transmissible from the animals to the humans, is characterized by its complexity. This means that the behavior of the individual owners should be uniform and coordinated by a specific center. For example, everybody should vaccinate their animals simultaneously, eliminate the sick animals (carriers of disease), disinfect the buildings, pastures, etc. All these activities cause losses and technological inconveniences to the individual owner: vaccinations temporarily interfere with the productivity; quarantines impede the trade

with animals and animal products and limit the access of the animals to cheap pastures; disinfection of the pastures is connected with considerable expenses; elimination of the sick animals means loss for the individual farmer. On the other hand, if no measures are taken to fight the epizootic diseases and the zoonoses, this will cause even greater losses both to agriculture and society. Table 2 shows the annual expenses world wide for the most prevalent infectious animal diseases. The biggest share of these expenses is for the foot and mouth disease. It is a strongly contagious viral disease, belonging to the zoonothroponoses, which has panzootic dissemination. If we want to fight effectively such type of diseases, the measures against them should be obligatory. All attempts to select separate measures as being desirable or undesirable for the individual owners, measures that can be taken and measures that can be avoided ruin the expected health effect and make the already undertaken measures meaningless. From an organizational point of view, the most important thing is to carry out the specific veterinary technology and to overcome the possible opposition from the individual owner. Only the organs of the government – the ministry, the regional and municipal bodies, using organizational and directional methods, as well as controlling functions, can assure that the technology is carried out properly. Fighting for the health of the animals, the veterinary system achieves one even more important result – the safety for the health of the people.

Table 2. Estimates of the cost of the principle diseases of animals in US\$ millions

Diseases common to several species	
Foot and mouth disease	50,000
Rift Valley fever	7,500
Cattle	
Mastitis	35,000
Leptospirosis	4,500
Brucellosis	3,500
Shipping fever	3,000
Bluetongue	3,000
Calf diarrhea	1,750
Enzootic bovine leucosis	900
Pigs	
Trichinellosis	2,500
Gastroenteritis	1,800
Aujeszky's disease	650
Pasteurellosis	500
Horses	
Potomac fever	2,000
Equine influenza	1,200
Equine infectious anemia	1,000
Poultry	
Avian retrovirus infections	1,000
Fowl cholera	200

CONCLUSIONS

Making this fight more effective was one of the first reasons to build up the organization of the veterinary service. The very first complete law for veterinary service in Bulgaria, adopted in 1897, established a special fund "Epizootic diseases", and in 1899 the regulations for the establishment and the consumption of the fund were ratified. In order to harmonize the local interests of the farmers with the global interests of the country, the fund started to pay compensations for killed sick animals and for other measures. The treatment of the sick animals and the medicines were free for

the poor farmers. This shows that as early as the beginning of the organized veterinary service there existed a prominent social element – differentiation of the animal owners according to their social status. The state did not leave out of the system of the veterinary care those farmers who could not pay. On this basis later, in 1924, preparing the Law for the sanitary and veterinary service, professor G. Pavlov created public veterinary medicine in Bulgaria, which gained international recognition. The director of the International Epizootic Bureau in Paris, prof. E. Leclainche, with his many years of experience, defined it as a new stage

in the history of veterinary medicine – the stage of socialization of veterinary service.

Having in mind the existence of the dual structure in Bulgarian agriculture at present, this socialization should be introduced again. The historically present social element should be developed in the implementation of the veterinary functions, using the opportunity to introduce varying fees according to the level of the income of the farmers. The help for the small farms, raising small numbers of animals, can be done using various financial sources:

- renewal of the fund “Epizootic diseases”;
- social and health funds of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry;
- anti-epizootic funds from programs of EU.

This financial help will have a social impact for the farmers in need, as well as a health consideration – ensuring safe animal products for the population as a consumer. These considerations become even more important taking into account the requirements of the European market – then they turn into economic, health and political responsibilities of our country.

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