

in our history with no human deaths from rabies. Veterinarians vaccinate seven million of the nation's fifty million dog and cat population annually. Research is under way to develop means for elimination of rabies in bats and other wildlife.

Many viral diseases of man are transmitted by insects, and the survival of the virus depends upon birds and other animal hosts. Three types of insect-borne virus encephalitis are recognized in the United States. Veterinarians determine that species of animal life that are essential reservoirs of infection and those that form necessary links in the animal-human infection chain.

*Development of Treatment of Preventives.*—Veterinary medicine, formerly oriented to the study of animal diseases for the benefit of animals themselves, since 1940 has been oriented to comparative medicine and the biomedical sciences. Advances in veterinary medicine contribute materially to human welfare through the protection of man against certain transmissible diseases, the insuring of a stable economy for production of essential food and fiber, and the safeguarding of the wholesome supply of food products of animal origin.

Today, veterinary medicine is faced with the additional challenge of providing adequately trained manpower for research where animals serve as biological models for studies of diseases that primarily affect man, and whose solution can only indirectly benefit animals.

*Food Hygiene.*—In response to the nationwide demand for consumer protection, Congress passed the Wholesome Meat Act in 1967 (Public Law 90-201) and Congress will consider at least three bills pertaining to inspection of poultry and poultry meat products. The above legislation requires hundreds of veterinarians to implement the new program. Veterinarians participate in food hygiene research and advise and assist in the development and maintenance of recommended ordinances regarding milk sanitation, poultry inspection, and sanitation of food service establishments. Animal diseases are of public health significance because some are transmissible to man through milk, meat, poultry and other animal food products. Food products may also serve as vehicles of human infections, namely, typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever and streptococcal infections. The American public takes wholesome food supplies for granted and does not realize that often it is only through the activities of veterinarians that foods of animal origin come from healthy animals and are inspected to insure their safety before reaching the consumer.

In fiscal year 1966, 104,988,350 animals were slaughtered under Federal Meat Inspection. Veterinarians direct all slaughtering and administer the over-all meat inspection program, as well as the humane slaughter law, which requires that animals be rendered insensible before slaughter begins. During 1966, over 264,992 animals at slaughter were condemned by veterinarians as unfit for human consumption. In addition, over 9,765,514 animal carcasses were temporarily retained until diseased or affected portions were removed.

Veterinarians in the Bureau of Veterinary Medicine of the Food and Drug Administration are concerned with the protection of human health. They develop scientific methods for detecting worthless or harmful drugs and assure that foods, drugs, and cosmetics are wholesome, safe to use, made under sanitary conditions, and truthfully labeled. They determine the safety or danger of additives (such as antibiotics and other growth stimulating drugs) in feed consumed by food-producing animals to insure that meat, milk, or eggs are safe for human consumption.

Unfortunately, the shortage of veterinarians available for food inspection has curtailed the federal, state, and municipal food inspection programs and has sometimes allowed adulterated, unwholesome, mislabeled, and contaminated food to reach the consumer.

A wide variety of chemicals are used to protect animals and crops against insects. Many of these chemicals leave a toxic residue which is cumulatively deposited in the animal. When the residue exceeds acceptable levels of safety, the affected product is disposed of in accordance with good food hygiene principles.

*Protection Against Importation of Foreign Diseases.*—The risk of introducing foot-and-mouth disease into the United States grows with increasing travel abroad and the prevalence of the disease throughout much of the world. Great Britain is experiencing the most severe outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in its history. Over 2,300 herds (415,800 animals) died or were slaughtered from the beginning of the outbreak to February 1968 in a campaign to eradicate this devastating disease.