

They provide service to 25 million dogs, 20 million cats, and an estimated 20 million caged birds in the United States.

THE INCREASING NEED FOR DOCTORS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

The national demand for veterinarians has increased as the population has increased and as the veterinarian's role in our society has broadened. The nation's present total of 24,328 D.V.M.'s cannot fulfill the current responsibilities of the veterinary medical profession.

Recent new legislation has placed extensive additional demands upon veterinarians. Hundreds of veterinarians will be required to carry out the requirements of the 1967 Wholesome Meat Act and the 1966 Laboratory Welfare Act. Several hundred more will be required when bills on poultry inspection, currently before Congress are enacted.

As our population increases and creates a demand for a greater food supply, control of animal diseases becomes imperative. Current estimates indicate the need for a 50 per cent national increase in food production by 1975 and a 200 per cent increase by the year 2000.

The federal government places a \$2.8 billion annual price tax on livestock and poultry losses due to infectious and non-infectious diseases, insects, parasites and nutritional disorders. In addition to this actual loss, more than \$245 million was spent in 1959 for pharmaceuticals, biologicals and other treatments for animal use.

Industries ultimately affected by loss of livestock through disease include meat packers, tanners and animal fiber producers. The meat packers report an estimated \$31 million loss due to condemnation of carcasses in 1960.

Nationally, disease causes a loss of \$6.73 per head on feed lot cattle going to market. In Ohio alone, the annual loss exceeds \$3.5 million.

An increasing proportion of doctors of veterinary medicine annually enter biomedical research and service in salaried positions in industry and government. According to a survey conducted by the American Veterinary Medical Association, 45.4 per cent of all veterinarians who graduated in 1964 entered health activities other than private practice. (In contrast, only 29 per cent of the 1964 newly graduate physicians entered fields of health activities other than patient care.) Many enter professional health-related activities in areas such as (1) public health; (2) laboratory animal medicine; (3) U.S. Army and Air Force; (4) animal disease control agencies; (5) biomedical research in government, universities, and industrial laboratories; (6) meat inspection service; (7) World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and (8) The Pure Food and Drug Administration.

The competition for doctors of veterinary medicine is evidenced by the extensive advertising of industrial firms and the federal government in *Science* magazine and in the professional veterinary medical journals. A shortage of veterinarians has made it impossible for the pharmaceutical and chemical industries to employ adequate numbers to conduct research designed to discover, develop, and test drugs and chemicals for food and cosmetic additives and for treatment and prevention of disease. In the field of toxicology, this shortage has reached emergency proportions. With over 3,000,000 chemicals known, and new ones being synthesized at the rate of 7,000 a year, far more veterinary toxicologists are needed than presently can be trained by the colleges of veterinary medicine. The international tragedy which occurred a few years ago, when many babies were born without hands or feet because pregnant mothers consumed thalidomide, could have been averted by animal testing of the compound "thalidomide" prior to human use.

The "Community Health Concept" being promoted across the United States further exaggerates the need for veterinarians. The commentary on the urban "rat problem" in a recent issue of *Time* magazine cited five major diseases of this rodent which are readily transmissible to man. Doctors of Veterinary Medicine have made significant discoveries pertaining to each of those five major diseases. Veterinarians are adaptable professionally and scientifically, and will serve well within the framework of the new "Community Health Concept."

Dr. W. T. S. Thorp, a member of the Advisory Council of the Bureau of Health Manpower, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has predicted a shortage of 20,000 veterinarians by 1985. He declared that this is occurring at a time when modern medicine in all its categories, including veterinary medicine, requires a greater degree of competence and specialization than ever before.