

The role of veterinarian in society essay



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The veterinarian profession is thousands of years old and dates to the time when the first animals were domesticated. In recent years this profession has begun to take on increasing importance due to the expanded role of the veterinarian in society. To assure adequate realization of these roles by the existing body of veterinarians, further support is necessary for schools preparing this kind of professionals. In this paper we will look at the multiple roles played by veterinarians in society.

The veterinarian profession remains loyal to its original role - that of caregiver for animals. Millions of Americans keep pets at home, little creatures that unite them with nature. The illness of a home pet can be a serious depressant for a person eager to see one's favorites sound and active. Seeing a pet get sick or die can be a major downer, resulting in emotional breakdowns and even decreased productivity in the workplace.

That is why it is so important to secure a safe environment for animals that were taken out of nature and transplanted to contemporary urban environments, often lacking adaptation ability for their new homes.

Veterinarians are able to give quality care to "loved family members when viewed through the window of the Human/Animal Bond" (The College of Veterinary Medicine) are in great need in our society. Home animals often become close friends of children who learn to perceive nature through interaction with a dog or a cat; they are the last bond to life for many elderly or disabled people. It is important therefore to preserve the lives and health of such companions who give help to human being saving them from solitude.

Veterinarians support the economic performance of the nation in many ways. Most importantly, they contribute to the rise of agricultural productivity and decrease in the cost of food through their efforts directed at prevention of animal disease. The elimination of many diseases that used to plague animal populations has led to increase in productivity. Apart from disease control, veterinarians “ have developed sophisticated on-the-farm programs that focus on increasing profitability by eliminating subclinical disorders, sustaining health, and promoting higher levels of performance while being ever mindful of animal welfare” (Penn Veterinary Medicine). There is a special subdivision of the profession named food animal veterinarians developing recommendations on adequate feeding, promotion of reproductive activity, immunization, and other aspects of farm management.

The veterinarian is the primary source of information about enhancing efficiency of agriculture for contemporary farmers. Apart from delivering results that offer direct impact on the economy, veterinarians are also engaged in fundamental research that has far-reaching biomedical consequences. The impact of this research will be important not only for development of new cures for animals. The One Medicine approach popular nowadays holds that results obtained in the study of one animal species can be utilized to reveal dependencies in the functioning of another. Thus, results of veterinarian research can be used to gain new insights into the biology of the human species. Veterinary science as it exists today is, by its nature, “ a comparative and gives rise to the basic science disciplines of comparative anatomy, comparative physiology, comparative pathology, and so forth” (Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources).

This comparison may prove useful for discovery of new aspects of human anatomy and physiology, as well as exploration and eradication of certain diseases that affect both humans and animals. For example, the research of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) in USDA has led to a number of important discoveries that had significance for the whole field of medicine. BAI isolated the first Salmonella, explicated the mechanisms of immunity caused by interaction of virus and serum and revealed the protozoan parasite responsible for Texas cattle fever. The latter discovery made possible the conquest of the yellow fever, a fact acknowledged in 1920 by Simon Flexner of Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research (Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources). The scope of a veterinarian's activities is so diverse that the professional may at one point come across situations where his/her role will include prevention of antisocial activity that may lead to deterioration of public morale.

The issue under discussion is so-called hoarding, a practice defined as actions of someone who “ accumulated a large number of animals, overwhelming that person's ability to provide even minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, and veterinary care” (Kuehn 2002). The unexplained need to surround oneself with a disproportionate number of animals can arise due to some sort of psychological disorder and can be dangerous not only for animals, often dying due to lack of nourishment or unsanitary conditions, but also for the families and neighbors of the person, not excluding the hoarder himself. To combat this unwanted phenomenon, the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium was formed in 1997. The Consortium was formed with the inclusion of “ an interdisciplinary group that

includes a veterinarian, a physician, a psychologist, social workers, and a humane society leader" (Kuehn 2002). The role of a veterinarian in prevention of hoarding that is obviously a crime against living nature is extremely important.

It is the duty of a veterinarian professional to determine the accumulation of animals in deplorable condition and to take measures to rescue them and surrounding human being from this situation. Besides, veterinarians have a say in protecting the society from more imminent and serious threats, such as agricultural bioterrorism. Terrorism remains one of the top threats for the world today, and terrorist groups have already demonstrated a developed understanding of the availability of such a weapon as bioterrorism. That is why veterinarians continue to work to develop effective measure of combating bioterrorism. The profession has a key role in warding off an even more imminent threat - the spread of new and long-forgotten animal diseases including those that can be contracted by humans. A recent and continuing epidemic of bird flu is yet another manifestation of the fact that human society cannot afford to ignore animal disease since it is dependent on the well-being of its animal companions.

Another vivid example is the epidemic of mad cow disease that resulted in a loss of \$6. 5 billion in the UK alone, with 90 deaths connected with the consumption of infected meat that aroused Creutzfeld-Jakob disease. The range of diseases that have to be closely monitored also include foot and mouth disease, swine fever, fowl plague (Penn Veterinary Medicine).

Outbreaks of animal disease, even if they do not evoke similar casualties among humans are still disastrous to the national economy and in particular

agriculture. Animals have a great role in many spheres of our society, and everywhere they need qualified veterinarian assistance. We may not always realize that some spheres of human activity are unthinkable without animals.

Such is, for example, the horse industry that provides pleasure and entertainment for a large group of people. In Pennsylvania alone, this industry is valued at about \$5 billion, which is an important contribution to the economy of the state (Penn Veterinary Medicine). This industry will not be able to succeed and progress without close cooperation with veterinarians. One cannot but mention the role of laboratory animal medicine in biomedical research. The use of animals has ensured the success of many biomedical studies. To this day, laboratory animals are used in research aimed at finding the cure for the most perilous diseases of today, such as AIDS and cancer.

Today's scientists cannot do without a constant supply of animals, and it is the duty of veterinarians trained in the field to breed those for the purposes of science. With all of the above said, it is clear that veterinarians perform a number of very important functions in society and are directly related to preservation of well-being of human society. By caring for animals, they also preserve the emotional state of humans; by fighting animal disease, they keep humans safe; and by doing research that is helpful in fighting human disease, they pave the way for advancement in 'human' health care. For all these reasons, veterinarian profession has to be supported, with the number of veterinarian graduates growing over the years.