

Veterinary Practice in Ontario

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THE PURPOSE of this article is to elaborate on a few differences between veterinary practice in Iowa and practice, as I knew it, in Newmarket, Canada. Newmarket is a town in southern Ontario, between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe, about 30 miles north of the city of Toronto. Here, for seven years, I was associated with another practitioner in conducting a mixed veterinary practice consisting mostly of large animal work.

Our climate was more humid and more moderate than that of Iowa. The temperature seldom went over 75° in the summer or lower than zero in the winter. However, the winters were longer with much more snow, necessitating the stabling of livestock from about the middle of October to the beginning of May.

There were some beef herds, but dairy cattle were responsible for at least 60 percent of all our income. The most popular breeds were Holsteins, Ayrshires, Jerseys and Guernseys respectively. There were no Brown Swiss cattle. During the winter, the cattle were stabled in barns warm enough to do veterinary work in comfort. Mastitis was by far the most costly disease to the dairy farmer. Besides treating individual cases with antibiotics and stimulants, many farmers had their herds inoculated with a stock or autogenous bacterin every six months.

Cobalt deficiency was very common.

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Calves, deficient in cobalt, chewed and licked persistently at their stalls and showed unthriftiness and anorexia. Bulls became slow in service with a slight loss of appetite. If not treated, they eventually became very thin. Cows showed acetone-like symptoms, i. e., lack of appetite and drop in milk flow. Some farmers reduced the incidence of acetone in their herds by including cobalt in the ration. I would like to emphasize that cobalt deficiency was more common in growing animals than in adults and also that the symptoms usually took a long time to develop. When treatment was given, even to advanced cases, results were spectacular. In five days time the animal showed almost unbelievable improvement.

Calfhood brucellosis vaccination between 6 and 9 months of age was widely practiced. The Dominion Department of Agriculture supplied the vaccine through local laboratories free of charge to practitioners. The farmer paid only for the cost of its administration — usually one dollar per head. We vaccinated cows only in herds that were suffering from an “abortion storm.” All cows open or bred less than two months were vaccinated twice, about ten days apart, with 3 and 7 cc. doses respectively. Cows pregnant two months or more were isolated, if possible, and treated after freshening. Farmers were advised to market cows that aborted more than once.

Ontario veterinarians have made thousands of dollars annually by testing cattle

for export to the United States. Most of the cattle I tested went to New York, Ohio and Illinois. Export testing was an easy way to make a great deal of money in a short time. However, it was spasmodic due to variations in the market. Also we had to be very careful lest some cunning cattle buyer succeeded in tricking us into being dishonest and breaking regulations. Young veterinary graduates, heavily in debt and eager to make money were the easiest victims of some buyer's crooked scheme. Many such veterinarians have suffered by paying heavy fines and enduring shady reputations.

Our swine population was small as compared to that of Iowa. Nearly every farmer had about 50 hogs. It was the practice to stable all hogs, except breeding stock, all year round. This resulted in much dietary enteritis from improperly ground feed and unbalanced diets. Infectious atrophic rhinitis has been very prevalent for eight years. Some farmers crossed a purebred, rhinitis free Yorkshire with a pure bred, rhinitis-free Tamworth to produce a hybrid which did not seem to develop the disease as readily nor as severely.

Our sheep practice consisted of the usual dystocias, pregnancy disease, etc. Many sheep herdsmen asked us to come out to worm their sheep whenever we thought it necessary. For this purpose most Ontario veterinarians used an "explosive phenothiazine bolet" which incorporated an effervescent mixture. It was manufactured by Merck & Co. in Canada only, and was supposed to possess the rapidity of administration of a bolet with the more certain admixture of the suspension with the stomach contents. Young lambs were drenched because of the danger of choking on a bolet.

There was an abundance of saddle-horse practice in the district round Newmarket. Most of it was done by veterinarians who specialized in horse work.

Practitioners doing part-time government work received \$15.00 per day. A days work could easily be done in about four hours. Like most graduates I did government work for about one and one

half years. It was good experience and helped me to get acquainted with the farmers.

Our fees in general were lower than those in Iowa, but so were our expenses. Some items which were much lower than in Iowa were; food, especially meat and milk products; alcoholic drugs, such as tinctures and fluid extracts; auto license; all kinds of hired labor; and last but not least, income taxes. Our fees should have been higher but for a few uncooperative veterinarians in the district who worked cheaply just to "get the business". These practitioners did good veterinary work and gave good service. They were tough competition.

This article would not be complete without mentioning that Canadian veterinarians in the Dominion Dept. of Agric. have prevented hog cholera and rabies from ever gaining more than a temporary foothold in Canada. The only prophylactic vaccination done for these diseases has been on animals just prior to export to countries which ask for such a procedure. We do not believe these methods would be applicable in every country, but the slaughter and quarantine policy has worked very well for us in past outbreaks.

Canada is justly proud of her position in regard to hog cholera. The country has potentialities as a bacon exporter and has a reputation as a pork consumer. Of all the swine diseases encountered in Europe and North America, none have been more devastating than hog cholera. Canada, with the exception of Newfoundland, has been free of hog cholera since 1946 and has had few outbreaks since 1942. The absence of this disease in Canada, may be partly due to chance but it is also due to drastic measures by federal veterinarians in a country where the production of pork with its by-products is of importance to the national economy.

A survey conducted by *Drug Topics* shows an increase of 10.9 percent in animal and poultry products sales volume by rural drugstores.