EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

WORDS ON SPECIALIZATION

Most of the veterinarians 50 years ago were practitioners only. There was little or no specialization. They were seldom asked to look at a hog, chicken or a dog. Indeed, some felt it was beneath their professional dignity to do so. Discoveries in the medical and veterinary sciences as well as a changing economic world made possible more accurate diagnoses and therapeutics. The veterinarian was forced to recognize that other animals besides the horse were worthy of his attention. The whole field was thus expanded to such an extent that today no individual can hope to become proficient in all phases of the science or even to be well versed in all phases. It is necessary to choose that branch of the profession which best suits him and pursue it.

Although the degree of specialization at the present time has tremendously increased in the last 50 years, there is still need for a greater number of veterinarians within the several branches of the profession. The practitioner is still the key man in disease control and eradication and probably always will be. However, the success of his mission depends upon the use of better diagnostic and therapeutic methods made available to him by specialists in other divisions of the profession. Generally speaking, the practitioner is to busy to concentrate on any one problem. This leaves the necessary research .up to the specialist in that particular field.

In addition to veterinary research, veterinarians are needed in the Public Health Service and the Bureau of Animal Industry. All the veterinary colleges need additional qualified faculty personnel. It is true that many of these positions may not be as lucrative as a general practice, but they do offer security. The poultry industry and the fur breeders have long been asking for more attention from veterinarians.

Thanks to specialization there are many opportunities for today's veterinarian. It is up to him to grasp the opportunity and use it to further the progress of a worthwhile profession.

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