



# EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

## Internship for Veterinarians?

For several years veterinarians have considered the desirability of an internship either before the student is granted his D.V.M. degree or before being granted the license to practice. Now that the Pennsylvania State Board of Examiners requires a period of internship, the subject is receiving more discussion in other states than previously.

In human medicine the position of intern is as old as the profession itself and is today considered an essential part of the physician's training. Certainly the young veterinarian would be better equipped at the outset of his career if such a system were adopted in the veterinary profession. However, there are certain problems peculiar to veterinary medicine which do not have their counterpart in human medicine.

Whereas the medical intern spends his internship in a hospital under the supervision of many competent physicians, the veterinary trainee for the most part would be dependent for guidance upon one man. Therefore, the selection of the preceptor is a factor of utmost importance. This man, in order to qualify for the position of preceptor, should have certain qualifications, i.e. a high standard of ethics, respect in his community and recognized profession skill. In other words, he should be a credit to his profession in very respect. A veterinary preceptor of this type would play an important role in building a desirable professional foundation for the future veterinarian.

The financial support of the veterinary intern raises another problem. Surely he is deserving of some remuneration. Some might argue that the trainee stands to benefit the most from the preceptor-intern relationship and therefore is entitled to no pay. Nevertheless, the intern must live and it seems unreasonable to ask him to support himself during this time; indeed, he could not do justice to his veterinary training. Perhaps a pay program compatible both with the student's worth to his preceptor and the cost of living could be devised. Assuming such an arrangement existed, would there be a sufficient number of veterinarians willing to cooperate?

The problems pertaining to this subject are under careful study by the Association of Deans of the American Colleges of Veterinary Medicine. We are confident they will arrive at a workable solution. The question is timely as it will affect student, practitioner, and the profession as a whole. Any program which will raise the standards of the profession deserves our wholehearted support and cooperation.

**Donald Fuller**