

VETERINARY MEDICINE IN ISRAEL

by Uria Marinov*

Israel lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, close to the meeting point of Europe, Asia and Africa.

The history of Israel begins in the land of Israel, at one time called Canaan. The country entered into history about 2000 B.C. at the time of its identification with the Jewish people.

In the last quarter of the 19th century the Jewish national revival started. Hundreds of thousands of Jews began to return to the land of Israel to cultivate the soil, establish industries and build towns and cities.

The Land:

The total area of Israel is 8,000 square miles. It is an irregular narrow strip about 265 miles long stretching from the hills of Galilee in the north to the Red Sea in the south. It is bounded on the north by Lebanon and Syria, on the east by Syria and Jordan, on the south by Egypt, and the west by 117 miles of the Mediterranean coast. Israel has a typical sunny and warm summer with mild rainy winter from November to March. Sub-tropical fruits are raised in the hot and low areas, tobacco and deciduous fruit trees on the cool hills, and grains, vegetables, cotton, sugarbeets and ground nuts in the coastal area.

The capital of Israel is Jerusalem with a population of 156,000. It has been an inhabited place since the dawn of his-

tory and was the capital of King David about 1000 B.C. The modern town, built in the last century, lies in the hills west of the old city. The largest city in Israel is Tel-Aviv, a coastal metropolis with a population of 400,000.

The People:

Israel has a population of 2,300,000: two million Jews, 200,000 Moslems, and 100,000 of other religions. The Jewish population has tripled since 1948. Only 37% were born in the country; the rest came from a hundred different countries.

The right of every Jew, wherever he may come from, to settle in Israel is one of the fundamental principles of the state. More than one million immigrants, most of them without any skills or capital, were absorbed during the last 16 years. They built some 450 settlements in every corner of the state.

The agriculture:

Except for cereals, grain fodder and fat, Israel's farmers produce all local requirements. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the fact that for centuries the Jews were divorced from the soil and the bulk of the immigrants had never held a hoe before their arrival.

From this origin springs the unique pattern of land settlement characteristic of Israeli agriculture ranging from voluntary collectivism to individual cultivation. While up to a few years ago there were serious shortages in agricultural products, the problem today is to plan cultivation

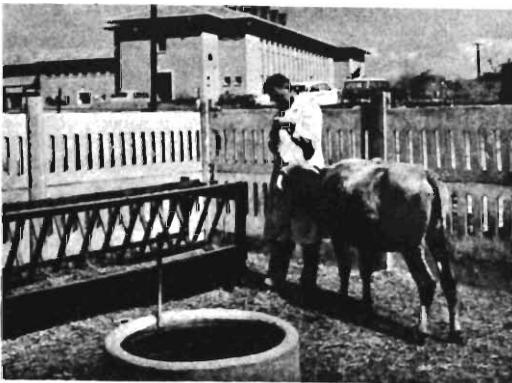
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and marketing to offset surpluses of many types of produce.

Centuries of neglect had left much of the land unfit for cultivation. By draining swamps, anchoring dunes, ameliorating the aridity of the soil and finding hitherto untapped sources of water, the people of Israel more than doubled the area of cultivation. Today over 1,000,000 acres are cultivated. Special attention has been paid in recent years to cattle breeding. A number of Holstein cows and bulls were brought from the U. S.

The same general pattern is true for beef cattle. Although most of the nation's protein needs are supplied by modern and intensive poultry industry, beef cattle are imported from many countries to build a new Israeli breed.

Sheep are also used extensively and are milked for the production of cheese. Most of the sheep and cattle are milked with milking machines, and artificial insemination is used exclusively in dairy cattle.



At the Agricultural Research Station, Nes Ziona

Agricultural education:

Israel has several institutions for higher education; some of them are known the world over for their achievements in science. The medical school in Jerusalem, the agriculture college in Rehovot (parts of the Hebrew University), Israel Institute of Technology and Weizman Institute are some of these institutions. Special attention is given to research in agriculture and applied areas. The Institute of Agriculture is responsible for the planning of research and is the highest scientific



The Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Centre at Ein Kerem, Jerusalem

authority in the field. It was founded by the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture Research Station and the Hebrew University's department of agriculture. A thousand-acre central experimental farm and an experimental farm in the north and in the south are part of this institute.

So far Israel does not have a veterinary medical school. A special committee from the different organizations concerned with the problem is working now on a program to open a school. The only problem concerning the opening of a school is that of how many veterinarians a year can such a small country support. All the veterinarians practicing today in Israel are graduates of European and American schools.

Veterinary Practice:

Of the two hundred veterinarians in Israel, more than eighty are in agricultural areas; the rest are in government (sixty), municipal (forty), industry and research (twenty).

Most of the practitioners are members of a cooperative insurance company. The company was established by veterinarians some 30 years ago and is concerned with the veterinary service to most of the farmers. Each practitioner chooses the area in which he would like to work. He is supplied with a house, car, and all the instruments and supplies that he needs. In his area he provides the farmer with continuous care to all animals. The farmer insures each of his animals and pays a premium once a year. For this premium

he gets all the services needed such as pregnancy diagnosis, problems in breeding, dystocias, care of the young and so on. He also will get the animal's value in case of death. This system works very well for both practitioner and farmer. The farmer gets constant veterinary service. Only professional men take care of the animals; they do not neglect the animals as a result of "economical" reasons. If the local veterinarian is unable to help the farmer, he is aided by a large organization that can provide the farmer with special diagnostic techniques, drugs and supplies. In case of death or accident the farmer does not suffer a loss.

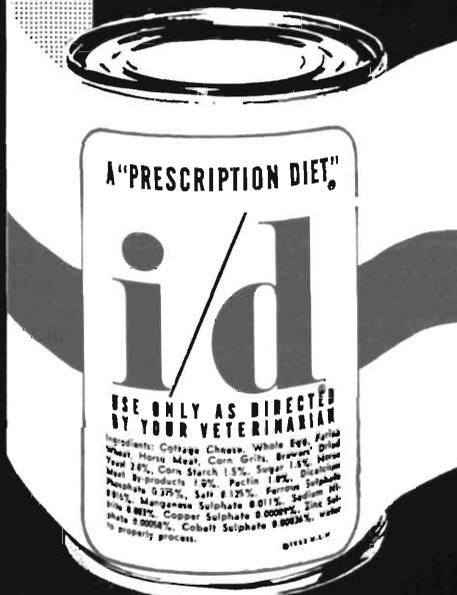
For the veterinarian this system also works very well. Although he gets a salary he is able to do extra work and increase his income. He can do small animal practice in the area and also work for non-insured farmers. He is supplied with all the drugs and instruments and does not need any capital to start a practice. Other benefits are: extra salary for more difficult areas, a diagnostic labora-

tory, free professional literature, and short courses in new departments.

Israel started some years ago with a drive to eradicate tuberculosis. A special fund was formed to help farmers who lost their animals during this drive. Only 1% of the animals today are found positive to the tuberculin test and in a year or two the country will be completely free of this disease. This program and all the other eradication and vaccination is done by the Veterinary Service of the government. The Veterinary Institute produces all the vaccines needed for diseases like Foot and Mouth, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis, and Anaplasmosis. Every calf in Israel today is being vaccinated with Strain 19 and checked again later in life. This institute also produces all the rabies vaccine which is provided for all dogs.

Other possible areas of veterinarians are the different research institutes, pharmaceutical companies, and private practice, most of whom work with small animals.

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