

Opening Ceremony

Tuesday Morning, December 4, 1973

Opening Remarks by Dr. Mac Cropsey

Good morning! We have a busy morning! First, I have the pleasure of introducing our esteemed president, Dr. Ben Harrington.

Response by Dr. Harrington

I would like to officially extend to you a warm welcome to our Sixth Annual Convention. I welcome all of you—members, guests, speakers, wives, and especially our students. We are so glad you came and we will do our best to take care of you. Thank you.

(Applause.)

*John F. Quinn, D.V.M., President
American Veterinary Medical Association*

I'm delighted to be here today among so many friends and colleagues in this beautiful city. Your climate here is certainly much more hospitable this time of year than what we're experiencing in my home state of Michigan. I've always liked the changing seasons in Michigan, but with the days getting so short now we see a lot of cold, rather gloomy weather and I must say that I've really been enjoying the temperature here. I don't know if the sun has much to do with it or not, but I'd also like to say that the hospitality here has been some of the warmest I've encountered in my travels for the AVMA, and I surely do want to thank you for that.

Our AVMA records and projections indicate that there are now approximately 28,400 professionally active veterinarians in the United States at the present time, and it has been estimated by the year 1980 there will be needed some 40 to 42,000 veterinarians. With present capabilities of existing veterinary schools, it is also projected that they will be able to produce approximately 35,000 veterinarians, leaving a deficit of some 5 to 7,000 veterinarians to take care of the professional needs of our country.

I don't suppose I need to remind you of the broad utility veterinary medical science has in many segments of society. Our profession contributes to many disciplines—particularly agriculture, biology and both human and animal medicine. Veterinary medical science serves as a bridge that links and strengthens each and is a vital part of the health sciences.

Certainly our profession has a long record of service in food animal medicine. This is a record we can be proud of. Fifty years ago 5% of the cattle in this country had tuberculosis. Now, less than one animal in 20,000 is found to have the disease. Today's losses due to brucellosis are estimated to be about one-tenth of the \$90 million annual losses reported 25 years ago.

Hog cholera was costing U.S. swine producers \$50 million a year before the nationwide eradication program began in 1962. Today the disease has been practically eliminated. In fact, there have been no cases of hog cholera reported in the continental United States since June of 1973. Much of the success of these programs can be attributed to the veterinary medical profession.

Two years ago veterinarians were primarily responsible for initiating, guiding and carrying out the program which stopped what could have been a national disaster when VEE threatened to sweep through the southwestern United States. The tremendous job of mass vaccination in all of the border states was carried out by practicing veterinarians in those states.

Veterinarians have always played a vital role in the food producing industry and will continue to do so from the farm right on up through the packing houses, processing plants and even the establishments where food is prepared and served.

At this point, I would like to defer to the expert opinions of a group commissioned by the National Academy of Sciences to predict coming developments in and related to our profession and to anticipate personnel requirements needed to meet future demands. I refer, of course, to the group known as the Terry Committee and their report entitled "New Horizons in Veterinary Medicine," which was published in the spring of 1972. You may not entirely agree with the committee's predictions. I must admit that I do not and that is one of the privileges of living in a free society, but this group did study our entire profession carefully and probably has a lot more to base its conclusions on than most of us, so let me share with you their predictions.

1. In *small animal practice*, the committee believes we'll need about twice as many veterinarians by 1980 as were active in 1970.

2. In *teaching and research*, the committee

suggests that the number of veterinarians needed would almost double.

3. The number of *industrial veterinarians* would increase about three-fold.

4. *Equine practice* would double in number by 1980.

5. *Animal disease control* services provided by 1,225 veterinarians in 1970 would need about 1,900, and they predict that the number of practitioners in *food animal medicine* will increase by only eight from 6,242 to 6,250.

As I mentioned earlier, not everyone concurs with the NAS projections. For example, many people believe that food animal medicine will require considerably larger numbers of veterinarians in 1980 than were active in 1970. Indeed, this would appear to be the case in Michigan for we have many more large animal practitioners today than we had 25 years ago and their numbers continue to increase. I personally find it hard to believe that we will not need more large animal practitioners in the years to come, particularly in those states which have large populations of food animals.

Certainly animal agriculture is changing rapidly and the utilization of veterinary medical services is also changing. For instance, the treatment of individual animals may not be economically sound in a large beef cattle feedlot. There the veterinarian may be a consultant in the management of the operation and his services therefore may apply to large numbers of animals in that situation. In the dairy industry, things will be quite different. While dairy herd size is increasing and will, I imagine, continue to do so, the veterinarian not only practices preventive medicine but also treats individual animals. As our population continues to increase, our need for food will continue to increase; and with our growing affluence it seems almost inevitable that the percentage of animal products in our diet will continue to increase. Surely some expansion in the numbers of veterinarians needed in food animal practice will be necessary.

I must point to another observation made by the Terry Committee—that while a number of livestock diseases have been eradicated or controlled, many other disorders have not yet been dealt with effectively.

I believe the need for veterinarians in food animal medicine will increase, yet as a member of the Veterinary Examining Board in Michigan, I have noticed that the majority of graduates are going into specialties other than food animal medicine. I think it will be up to AVMA and the

colleges of veterinary medicine to show young veterinarians this horizon and to encourage them to enter into this phase of our profession. It is highly important that the U.S. livestock industry has available to it the professional expertise of veterinarians experienced in the management, nutrition and treatment of food-producing animals.

From a worldwide standpoint, it seems fair to me to say that an adequate supply of wholesome and nutritious food for the world's people is a dream. The veterinary medical profession can and should play a key role in helping to make that dream a reality—in my opinion.

As you know, animals have a unique place in the food production scene. Ruminants can convert forages which are largely inedible for man into high-quality protein foods. Nearly 60% of the agricultural land of the world is better suited for forage production than for grain crops that can be consumed directly by people. Animals are also capable of converting large quantities of waste and by-products into nutritious food. Even though great strides probably will be made in the development of synthetic foods, I think animals will continue to contribute significantly for many years to world food production. Animal diseases, of course, are important limitations to production in most underdeveloped countries, and are the most important limiting factors in many others.

Veterinarians, obviously, can play a major role in solving problems of world food supply by helping to bring animal diseases under control.

These are some of the many reasons why I believe, personally, that there will be a continued need for increased numbers of food animal veterinarians and especially those primarily interested in bovine practice. With 100 million cattle in the continental United States and rapidly changing methods in the production of red meat and milk, the cattle industry of the United States will continue to have great need for the bovine practitioner.

In conclusion, I would like to tell you as AVMA members a little bit about the progress of the building project being carried on in Chicago.

As you know, the AVMA Executive Board was directed by the House of Delegates to purchase a tract of land in the Chicago area and proceed to develop a new home for the AVMA, owned by the organization.

A tract of land has been purchased in the Shaumburg subdivision—northwest of Chicago—about 10 minutes from O'Hare airport and it was originally hoped to begin the actual building project in August of this year with a projected

completion of the building by May of 1974, thus enabling the complete AVMA staff to move into the new headquarters coincidentally with the termination of our lease in the downtown Chicago area.

However, there have been some delays in the negotiations between the architect, contractor and AVMA. The architect became sick with hepatitis, which was the first cause of delay in contract negotiations. Secondly, it seems as though, and frustratingly, that negotiations between our attorney and the attorney for the contractor in arriving at a suitable contract agreement was taking an extremely long time.

On November 5 the Board of Governors met with the contractor to try to determine what the cause was of so much of the delay and, actually, the answer was quite laughable. It seems as though the Chicago contractors have not been used to dealing with organizations or companies on building projects where the latter has the cash money available. The contractor told us there is pretty much a set standard building contract used in the

Chicago area but that the contract offered by AVMA's attorney contained so many provisions which were different that it necessitated longer negotiations to reach an agreement.

I can happily say today that, even with our delays, work was to have begun the middle of November on the building and its estimated completion date is August 1974.

I think the Chicago office has sent a picture of this very beautiful building to the secretaries of all associations.

The building will encompass about 20,000 feet of usable space inside. This is about 8,000 feet more than the staff has available in downtown Chicago so that additional space has been provided for growth and future needs of the headquarters' staff.

That, in essence, is where our building project lies at the present time. I am very excited to think that when we occupy the building it will be paid for—both the land and the building.

Again, I want to thank you for inviting me to your very fine meeting.

1974 AABP CONVENTION
Sheraton Motor Hotel
Columbus, Ohio
December 8 - 11, 1974