

Role of statutory organs in promoting quality veterinary education for efficient animal health services

D.M. Kambarage,
Sokoine University of Agriculture
Box 3000
Morogoro
+255 23 260 4652
+255 704 502101
dominic@suanet.ac.tz

Important features of the practice of veterinary medicine

- The practice of veterinary medicine is a complex profession that has own peculiarities and for which the conduct anchors on addressing interests of (i) animal owners and their families; (ii) the animals and (iii) at times, the general public
- The practice is governed by laws/legislations which are aimed at guiding the conduct of the practice including guiding the personal conduct and practices of practitioners

Important features of the practice of veterinary medicine

- Other important pillars of the profession are:
 - > *Morality/moral values of professionals*
 - > *Code of Ethics*
- Common factor is the morality of the professionals as personal moral conception of what is right or wrong (*sense of guilty and serving as deterrent*) is what influences how one addresses legal and ethical implications of the practice
- Thus, the practice hinges on professionals making appropriate moral or ethical judgments/decisions **which are often prone to external influences**

Factors influencing moral/ethical judgments in the practice of veterinary medicine

- Dependence on veterinary practice as a business thus influencing practitioner's livelihood
- The harsh environment in which we operate the business which relates to the infancy of the sector and inadequate resource allocations
- Frequent policy changes, especially those impacting on veterinary structure with flaws in the chain of command and hence answerability

Factors influencing moral/ethical judgments in the practic...

- Perception of youths and the general public to Agricultural Education and Training (AET) as well as limited resource allocation
- Coping tendencies related to the multitude of professionals (Paraprofessional and Paraprofessional Assistants vs others) in the practice
- Weak professional career development system

Factors influencing moral/ethical judgments in the practic...

- Lack/inadequacy of clear roles of the public and private sectors
- Inadequate investment in disease surveillance and diagnostic systems

What needs to be done in order to harness the value of AET

- Re-directing government's and stakeholders' efforts and resource allocations for enhanced AET/veterinary education and also needed national commitment to use of science and technology in development
- Putting up mechanisms for upholding quality education
- Developing training programmes that are synergistic/adding value and those which uphold institutional system geared for quality services

Supporting arms

- To devise long-term investment plans to support transformation of the animal sector in order to support private veterinary sector
- To ensure that policy changes do not infringe on the veterinary structures
- Define/identify the kind of vet supporting personnel base required to serve as service providers/change agents.

Supporting arms

- Improved investment in disease surveillance and diagnostic systems
- Defining public and private sector roles in disease control and surveillance systems

Specific recommendations related to AET

- Because we have common animal health problems and hence common interests in the region it is fair that we work towards establishing a virtual regional body in form of a **Regional Network or Forum** for statutory bodies (and Deans of schools? which will allow:
 - sharing of information
 - harmonizing operations including SOPs
 - effective engagement of policy makers etc

Specific recommendations related to AET

- Since each Faculty/School of Veterinary Medicine in the region is producing graduates to work with more or less same animal health problems and for enhanced regional collaboration in animal health sector, there is a need to harmonise the BVM curricula as this will:
 - establish a good and sound BVM education base
 - allow credit transfers and
 - in the long term, ease recognition of qualifications and allow mobility of the work force.

Specific recommendations related to AET

- Currently, most statutory bodies register BVM graduates with the assumptions that veterinary schools would have done their best to equip students with requisite knowledge and skills. In order to get the bodies assured of the quality of the product, there is a need to get them involved in external examinations and in auditing of veterinary education programmes
- Statutory bodies should also participate in the process of reviewing and developing programmes and hence setting the agenda for quality and relevancy of the programmes

Specific recommendations related to AET

- In Tanzania and probably elsewhere, there are a number of diploma and certificate training programmes in animal health which form an integral part of AET. In order to guarantee quality, it is recommended that these programmes be audited periodically as above and some form of external examination be factored into the examination systems as recommended for the BVM programmes
- Overall, such reports should form the basis for recognition of qualifications

Specific recommendations related to AET

- There is also a need to define what value-adding non-degree programmes are required to support the veterinary system=hence need to carry out training needs assessment
- Realising the value of professional career development in quality animal health services, it is important that statutory bodies in partnership with veterinary schools work out sound mechanisms for development and delivery of CPDs and recognition of other forms of knowledge-value adding activities

Specific recommendations related to AET

- Veterinary schools although belong to administrative entities that are autonomous and operating within the ministries responsible for high education or education in its broadest sense, it is of great value if ministries responsible for livestock can consider these institutions as their integral arm in order to ensure that they produce quality graduates for improved performance of the livestock sector.
- Statutory bodies should serve as bridges for fostering closer linkages between veterinary schools and ministries for effective use of resources and harnessing knowledge/innovation generated through the academia

Specific recommendations related to AET

- The veterinary structure contributes to and is one of the major determinants of an effective and efficient veterinary practice and this influences how graduates make use of knowledge and skills acquired through training To this effect, there is a need to adopt a veterinary structure that promotes good practice and promotes delivery of quality animal health services
- It is therefore important to work out mechanisms that guarantee stability of the veterinary structures

CONCLUSION

- The quality of veterinary education and eventual extension services is a product of several factors and players.
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- In achieving this, development of smart partnerships between statutory bodies, government systems, private sector and training institutions is vital