

Educating the Youth on Veterinary Education Leading to Business

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Introduction

Educating the youth on veterinary education leading to business is an integrative approach to produce veterinary graduates as job givers rather than job seekers. Their strength lies on two important foundations: the science of veterinary medicine and entrepreneurship.

According to Cady (1961), "To educate (from "educare", to lead forth) never means to force into from the outside, but always means to draw out from within something already existing there." Thus, educating the youth means to bring forth ideas from the realm of concept to the world of manifestation.

Manuel and Cruzana (2002) states that, "Veterinary education is a component of the agriculture educational system wherein the science, art and philosophy of production, disease control, and health maintenance of livestock, poultry, companion and recreational animals, processing of meat, milk, and by-products, and safeguarding the health of wild mammals and birds, laboratory and aquatic animals, including public health, are undertaken, developed and promoted."

On the other hand, Topacio and Padilla (2002) stressed the involvement of veterinary professionals in their humanitarian role in the field of public health. Veterinary public health is a component of public health activities devoted to the application of professional veterinary skills, knowledge, and resources in the protection and improvement of human health. Veterinarians are involved in public health in the following areas: zoonoses, food animal production and hygiene, environmental protection and health, comparative medicine-biomedical research, disaster veterinary medicine and ethology and animal welfare.

These veterinary educators clearly defined the "animalitarian" as well as the humanitarian roles played by veterinarians in human society. Thus, a veterinarian is both an agriculturist and a medical man rolled into one.

From this wide field of scientific knowledge, someone who finds ideas, grabs the opportunities, takes the risks, converts or innovates concepts into the reality of products and services and sets aside comfort to establish a business, is a veterinary entrepreneur.

Veterinary Professionals and Entrepreneurs

In spite of the wide scope of knowledge that can be translated into real opportunity, few professionals including veterinarians take entrepreneurship as the road less traveled. Why newly-sworn in professionals choose to work for others instead of engaging in business may be because of the following reasons: lack of capital, high risk, lack of business exposure (both in theory and practice) and absence of opportunities.

“Entrepreneur” comes from the French word “entreprendre”, to undertake. Thus, an entrepreneur is a person who undertakes three important activities: organize, manage and assumes risks of a business. An entrepreneur is often defined as the owner of a small business who performs all or most of the business functions himself.

Studies revealed some of the qualities shared in common by entrepreneurs. Some of them are as follows (Ziberman, 2007; Copulsky and McNutty, 1974):

1. An entrepreneur makes things happen. He is somebody who takes a concept and converts it into a reality: a product, policy or business.
2. An entrepreneur is a risk taker, but he is not a gambler in the true sense. He calculates risks and shows prudence when chances of success can be weighed.
3. An entrepreneur is a prime self-actualizer. He is motivated to achieve. He enjoys being a doer. He has a strong desire for achieving a job well done.
4. An entrepreneur has a lifestyle of hard work –the harder he works, the luckier he gets. Often, he sets aside comfort to establish an enterprise.
5. An entrepreneur makes his entrepreneurial quality apparent at various ages. Entrepreneurship is as likely to be found in the old as in the young. It does not diminish with age.
6. An entrepreneur is likely to come from a minority or deprived group and was probably challenged by life from an early age.

Most of the qualities of entrepreneurs are alive in most of us. However, research showed that some of the traits present among professionals separate them from becoming entrepreneurs. Professionals do not have the same goals as entrepreneurs. Some of these traits which differentiate

them from entrepreneurs are (Copulsky and McNutty, 1974):

1. The professional is committed to his profession whereas an entrepreneur is forced to perform many functions as his ability and energy will allow.
2. The professional is committed to his own technology or skills whereas an entrepreneur is committed to the needs of the market.
3. The professional measures himself by his effort whereas an entrepreneur measures himself by the results he achieves in terms of profit.

Veterinary Education and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

After an uphill climb of being a professional, one is at the crossroad to find job to earn a living. Does a vet work for another in the service of veterinary medicine or engage in the business of veterinary medicine?

Unknown to most, a self-employed veterinarian has a big chance of becoming affluent, even in the most competitive and most powerful economy in the world. A 1995–1996 survey conducted in USA revealed that self-employed business owners and professionals dominate the list of American millionaires. The study also showed that veterinary services belong to the top 10 most profitable sole proprietorship businesses (Stanly and Danko, 1996). It is emphasized, however, that other than the right choice of profession, wealth is more often the result of a lifestyle of hard work, perseverance, planning and most of all self-discipline.

Locally, what business opportunities does veterinary education offer? Previously, it was mentioned that a veterinarian, is an agriculturist and medical man rolled into one. Having gone through veterinary education, some opportunities to enterprising professionals are found in Table 1.

Table 1. Business opportunities for veterinarians.

| Veterinary Education | Business Opportunities in Different Sectors |
|--------------------------|--|
| I. Medical Aspect | A. Service Sector <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Veterinary hospitals and clinics 2. Veterinary diagnostics 3. Veterinary equipment and supplies 4. Drug research and laboratory 5. Zoo 6. Aqua culture farm 7. Wild park 8. Geographic information system (GIS) 9. Farms (livestock and poultry) |

B. Manufacturing Sector

1. Pharmaceuticals/Biologics
2. Veterinary equipment and supplies
3. Diagnostic kits
4. Private abattoir
5. Poultry dressing plant
6. Stockyard
7. Pet foods

C. Marketing Sector

1. Veterinary equipment and supplies
 2. Private abattoir
 3. Veterinary drugs and biologics
 4. Diagnostic kits
 5. Pet shops and supplies
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II. Agricultural Aspect

A. Service Sector

1. Manpower training
2. Technology transfer
3. Techno tourism/eco-tourism

B. Manufacturing Sector

1. Livestock and poultry farms
2. Gamefowl farm
3. Equine farm
4. Feed mill
5. Feed ingredient manufacturing
6. Farm equipment
7. Waste treatment plant and facilities
8. Sustainable energy (biofuel)
9. Meat shops

C. Marketing Sector

1. Farm and breeding animals
 2. Farm equipment
 3. Feed mill and equipment
 4. Finished feeds
 5. Feed ingredients
 6. Meat shops
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* Globally, animal agriculture makes important contribution to human well-being through the production of livestock and poultry. One of the most important needs of human is a dependable food supply. The Hudson Institute has estimated that the demand for farm products containing animal protein will double or triple in the next 40 to 50 years with the world population expected to about 9 billion in the next 20 to 30 years. Thus, there will be many opportunities for veterinarians in agribusiness (Gloyd, 1998 cited by Radostits, 2001).

Piggery Production as an Entrepreneurial Model

Pig production just like any production enterprise, must satisfy four business parameters to be profitable. These are Quantity, Quality, Time and Cost. These four factors must be balanced to sustain the life and growth of the business. Veterinary entrepreneurs identify, if not create, possible innovations or interventions so to bring about the best product at the least cost. Thus, veterinary entrepreneurs are also considered as innovators. Following one of the known economic theories by Joseph Schumpeter, the innovation theory states that innovators or entrepreneurs are important to economic development, for they can transform theory into reality.

Reducing cost. Increasing power cost and the ill effects of climate change are classical challenges being faced by the pig producers. These two factors coupled with the high cost of raw materials like corn, cassava, and wheat being diverted for biofuel production certainly affects cost of production. To a veterinary entrepreneur, this is an opportunity to be taken advantage of. Farm wastes can be converted to biogas and can be used to generate electricity. When applied, electricity from waste helps reduce power cost. Also, piggery waste if properly managed can also produce feeds and fertilizers.

Improving quantity. Farrowing rate, litter size and reduced mortality are functions of quantity. The desired farrowing rate is 80% (Galangam et al., 2006), but is seldom achieved by piggery farms. For a veterinary entrepreneur, this is another opportunity. Adoption of a tried and tested AI technology using intrauterine-technique can provide a solution if adapted by veterinary practitioners. Intra-uterine AI using Absolute Technology can have impact above the industry target.

Improving quality and reducing time to market. Quality of hogs being produced can be improved using multi factorial approaches. This includes environmental health management, medication, and vaccination programs, nutrition and dietotherapy, and an appropriate breeding program, which all requires veterinary knowledge and animal husbandry skills. Quality enhancing program in hog production if properly mastered and maintained will reduce market time.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Veterinary schools should fortify courses with subjects that will help develop an entrepreneurial spirit. These institutions should take the lead in stilling values to graduates on the importance of entrepreneurship to the profession, industry and the country as a whole.

2. Veterinary professionals should develop deep understanding of the socio-economic realities, so as to help target opportunities with the end point of harnessing their veterinary knowledge in setting up a business.
3. Professional organizations in the veterinary field, should encourage, motivate, and recognize achievements of veterinarians in entrepreneurial field.
4. The government should create a business-friendly atmosphere to aspiring entrepreneurs. The government should ease some rules or minimize red tapes to make our country a haven for doing business not a worst place for running a business. Currently, World Bank ranks the Philippines number 126 out of 175 countries, almost at the near tail end of the worst places to do business (Philippine Export and News, 2007).
5. Financial institutions should follow examples of some banks making available funds and technical expertise in helping would be entrepreneurs through their various programs focused on SMEs (Dumlao, 2007).

About the Author: Dr. Benedicto A. Santiago, DVM, MSc, FPCSP, FPCVFP is now retired and enjoys his retirement at MELFARMS. He is Founding Member, Rizal Hog Multipurpose Cooperative, Founding Member and Fellow, Philippine College of Swine Practitioners and Member, Editorial Board of the Philippine Veterinary Directory. His email address is: melfarms@yahoo.com.

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