

Essay on the History of the Medical Affairs of Animals in the Western Ukrainian Land

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Received: October 27, 2021; **Published:** November 16, 2021

Abstract

Information on preventive and curative measures in animal diseases, organization of work of specialists to implement legislation in order to prevent diseases of animals and humans in Ukraine in ancient times.

Keywords: Diseases; Medical Measures; Orders; Animals; Epizootics

Introduction

A number of scientific publications by domestic authors [2,3,6,8] on the history of medicine reveals the origin, formation and development of medical affairs, including in different regions of Ukraine depending on political and socio-economic conditions. A significant number of scientific papers show the organization and formation of the state veterinary service of a particular region, oblast [1,4,5,7,9,10] or Ukraine as a whole [6]. Only a few researches cover the activities of medical professionals in order to prevent diseases and treat animals in certain historical conditions, in particular in the Renaissance.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research were to obtain data on the organization of the work of specialists to implement legislation to reduce animal and human morbidity, prevention of infectious animal diseases in Western Ukraine in the 16 - 17th centuries.

Materials and Methods

Separate archival documents of the State Historical Archive of Lviv, as well as some domestic and foreign literary sources, publications of the periodical press of the V. Stefanyk Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Lviv served as material for studying the medical affairs of animals in Western Ukraine.

Results of Research and Discussion

Due to the mass diseases of horses and cattle, the so-called «horse doctors» and «bloodletting» were described as early as the 15th century. Thus, already in this period, animal health professionals constituted a special profession, that has ancient historical roots and origins called «veterinarians». Along with issues related to the treatment of humans, therapists had a number of tips and guidelines for

the treatment of animals. Separate medical stables were created, where sick horses were isolated and treated. From 1626, veterinary specialists at large stables were called «konovalas».

In the 17th century, animal diseases became widespread, from which diseases were often transmitted to humans. Cases have been reported when removing skin from animals, people were infected, often fatally. Animals died both in the peasants and in the farms of rich people, princes.

Such facts of human infection from animals indicate the spread of anthrax, as described in the sources of horse breeding. At the same time, signs of severe swelling, ulcers in some areas, hemorrhages in animals were noted. Horse disease with rabies and other infectious diseases has become widespread.

During this long period, the most devastating terrible diseases were plague, mass inflammation of the lungs, splenic infection, carbuncle (anthrax), foot and mouth disease, sheep pox.

Terrible diseases spread in Europe, reaching the western Ukrainian lands, causing significant economic costs to animal owners. Anthrax was registered in Poland in 1628, 1776, the plague of cattle was spread from Italy in 1709 throughout Europe and lasted until 1717, later it was repeated in 1726-1730, 1740 and lasted almost until the beginning of the XIX century. The losses from the plague amounted to more than 3 million cattle from 1735 to 1770. Sheep pox was registered in Europe in 1714.

It was important to prevent the disease. For this purpose, activities were carried out to isolate sick animals. In the stables, windows and doors were irrigated with vinegar and juniper twice a day, and the stables were ventilated. It was forbidden to extract skins, fat, and meat from infected animals. The premises were disinfected with a mixture of saltpeter and sulfuric acid, which subsequently formed smoke that purified the air. Before feeding, the wooden troughs, gutters, ladders, rafters and roads were sprinkled with lime.

If the disease has arisen, the sick animals were placed away from homes. The burial place of animal corpses was fenced, buried to a considerable depth and sprinkled with lime. Means for the care of a sick animal were burned, the walls and ceiling of the stable were washed with alkali, bleached, and the clothes of the shepherds were washed in a strong alkaline solution.

Thus, in those distant times, in addition to the owners, the bearers of folk medicine were healers, witch doctors, shepherds, sheepbreeder, who provided first aid for animal diseases.

In accordance with government orders, quarantine and police measures, such as burying the corpses of dead animals and a number of other sanitary and hygienic measures, have been carried out since the 17th century.

The epizootics that spread among European countries were the result of the low level of sanitary and epidemiological condition of the country, widespread trade and movement of animals without proper medical examination, lack of quarantine measures, customs control and insufficient number of animal treatment specialists. Epizootics inflicted great economic losses on farms as well as states.

Due to the significant spread of epizootics in 1640, an order was issued forbidding the skinning of horse carcasses, and these animals should be buried deep in the ground, sick animals should not be sold or bought. Violation of these requirements of the order of the guilty was punished physically, with a whip and without any oblivion. Violators were also severely punished for violating orders: whipping was carried out in public on trading days with a large number of people and in the presence of family members of the perpetrator. The number of lashes was not regulated by law, therefore, there were deaths.

When epizootics occurred, special detachments were organized. Strong fortifications were built on the roads, and deep ditches were dug in the villages, which were filled with trees.

Since 1665, it has been forbidden by order to touch dead animals, and cords and wooden shelves have been used to bury animal carcasses. Corpses were buried in specially designated places far from settlements.

Measures to combat epizootics were carried out through administrative and medical, police authorities, because there were no special veterinary authorities in the 16th - 18th centuries.

In the 17th century, important legislative acts were issued, which provided for the isolation and quarantine of sick animals, burial of corpses away from homes, burning of infectious objects, carrying out certain sanitary measures at the slaughter of animals. Already at that time it was clear that the infectious agent can be in the animal organism and in the environment, can be transmitted from one animal to another, as well as from animals to humans and through various objects. Understanding these factors served as a basis for establishing rational and effective methods in the fight against epizootics.

However, due to the lack of medical staff, the implementation of veterinary measures was entrusted to the county heads. In the villages, these duties were to be performed by village elders and foremen. Beginning in the late 18th century, medical councils were established in the territories of the western Ukrainian lands as part of the voivodships, staffed by inspectors, obstetricians, and operators. The medical board was also to engage in veterinary work, including the prevention and cessation of animal deaths, the detection of infectious features of the disease, the promulgation of preventive measures and treatment.

From 1841 it was allowed to keep veterinarians at the administration of the voivodship, who had to teach some activities and the initial veterinary skills of peasants and farm owners of large settlements. The archival documents indicate the introduction of veterinarians in the staff and in some large counties to the positions of senior and junior veterinarians. But there were very few of these specialists.

Conclusion

1. The emergence and spread of infectious diseases of horses and cattle in the 16 - 17 centuries was a consequence of low sanitation, lack of proper medical examination, quarantine measures and insufficient number of specialists in the treatment of animals in western Ukraine.
2. Measures of struggle with epizootics were carried out through administrative, medical and police authorities because there were no veterinary authorities at that time.
3. At the end of the 18th century, councils were established in the territories of the western Ukrainian lands to prevent and treat infectious diseases of animals and humans.

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Volume 6 Issue 12 December 2021

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