

THE ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ANIMAL HYGIENE IN POLAND

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Abstract

Students of Veterinary Faculties have to know new or till now ignored issues especially in animal hygiene, behavior and ethology. In this paper author on the ground of many years' experiences in teaching of animal hygiene considers the problems of teaching of animal hygiene, discusses a problem concerning the name of subject and the essence of teaching of behavior, ethology and welfare. Author also shows connection and dependence of prevention and prophylaxis with animal hygiene as an interdisciplinary subject. He shows the urgent need of searching relation between animal production and environment.

According to the European Federation of Veterinary Physicians resolutions from the year 2000 veterinary physician should have full knowledge in some disciplines so far not learned enough during the veterinary studies. First of all it concerns animal hygiene and also some problems of behavior and ethology of animals. Till now the education concerning these issues was realized in the subject „Animal hygiene”.

The beginning of new century is a good occasion to sum up and predict the nearest future. Because I have been teaching animal hygiene on courses in some faculties almost 50 years I would like to share my experiences and remarks concerning this specialization. My experiences are mainly based on teaching this subject on veterinary faculty at Warsaw Agricultural University. Unfortunately in the program of studies for many years the new tendency of lowering the number of lectures and classes of animal hygiene is appearing.

Introducing new elements from ethology and welfare of animals is quite difficult. In some Universities in United States and Canada from 1993 instead of animal hygiene they are teaching the subject of animals' welfare.

In nowadays-animal production there is a need to define the disciplines “Welfare” and “Ethology of animals”. It comes from practical need of precise description of health status and state of physiological processes of some groups of animals in different environmental conditions. It is also necessary to define situations in which animals need protection (3). According to that, in my opinion, the limitation of teaching traditional animal hygiene in Poland and in some other countries is too soon. Disorders in welfare are the results of disobeying hygiene principals connected with assuring somatic and psychological welfare of animals.

In my opinion the problems of conception of welfare, reasons of disorders of welfare, criteria of estimating the level of welfare and some results of bad feeling and suffering of animals can be taught in the post graduated veterinary studies as it is realized in some countries in western Europe. For students of ground veterinary studies these problems could be too difficult. In Poland and some other countries there are ideas to introduce to Veterinary Faculties discipline, which could be known in the future as „protection of animals”. This discipline could bound some information from ethology, welfare with some genetic issues and could give knowledge about animal protection and show positive example of care about animals remembering relation between man and animal. I

think it is not necessary to enforce this subject to the ground studies because it will be a repetition of teaching animal hygiene and its specific issues such as prevention and prophylaxis (biosecurity).

The future veterinary physician should have skills in human communication and background of sociology to have good (useful or effective) contact with the owners of the patient and consumer of products of animal origin. This is why the elements of sociology knowledge should be included in the program of animal hygiene. For the same reasons in the program of animal hygiene the knowledge concerning breeding of animals in ecological agriculture should be also taught. It is a question if it could be realized in discipline „Protection of public health” carried out in veterinary faculties.

The modern program of animal hygiene should cover issues concerning veterinary prevention, non-specific prophylaxis and also metaphylaxis. These issues play a great role in preventing animal's diseases and in raising their producing efficiency. The role of animal hygiene is to establish the goals and tasks of prevention in animals' health protection. In many countries there are no special regulations concerning prevention and sometimes-theoretical knowledge in this subject is already enough. (9)

In Poland there is an opinion that prevention activities and preventions tasks concern only buildings for animals and its closest surroundings as well as technology of production. The main reason of this opinion is anthropocentric way of looking at the problem e.g. preventories for sick children. It seems that such opinion is limiting the issue of prevention problem. There is an open question to discuss whether it would be useful to limit prevention activities to the building and the nearest surroundings or expand prevention activities by adding tasks of general prophylaxis and animals' welfare (4, 6, 7). It can create plenty of tasks and unable realization of regular prevention activities. For many years the definition of prevention have meant hygienic and prophylactic activities before entering animals to the building and activities performed after entering animals to the building belong to general prophylaxis (8).

Veterinary prevention not only covers veterinary services so it should be understandable for all users and animals owners and other services that are indirectly connected with animals production. Because of different specialists engaged in prevention activities there are appearing articles with new vocabulary such as “veterinary prevention”, “zotechnical prevention” and “bioprevention”. In my opinion it is not right and there should be only one definition “veterinary prevention” because all the prevention activities have the same goal: to protect animals' health. Some of the faculties of Veterinary Medicine are calling the subject “prevention in keeping animals”. The most important thing is to establish one common definition of prevention and create law regulation for it.

Microbiology and veterinary epidemiology is covering specific prophylaxis. Unfortunately on many universities there are opinions that identify animals' hygiene with microbiology.

Already in 1865 Max von Pettenkofer said that diseases were caused not only by microbes but also by incorrect environmental conditions and feeding. Because of that he created the ecology school in human and animal hygiene. Professor Cena - Polish specialist in animal hygiene - was calling animal hygiene as ethology of breeding animals (1). According to him (2) animal hygiene is not only a prophylaxis postulating prevention of diseases. Animal hygiene is heading to improve the state of balance between animals and environment. The way to achieve it is proper choice of intensivity of environmental factors which are influencing animals in intensive production.

Animal hygiene is a complex biology science which aim is to keep the balance between the level of animal production and animals' health. It can be achieved by lowering the sensitivity to damaging environmental factors. The animal hygiene together with veterinary prevention and nonspecific prophylaxis and some problems of animals welfare should give some knowledge about

mechanisms of activity of environmental factors on the health and productivity of animals and hygienic value of products of animals origin.

Now in Poland and in many other countries this subject has a greater meaning because of introducing new technologies and mechanical equipment and new types of buildings in animal production. These new factors are changing the way of keeping animals especially in big specialist farms where the ethopathologic factors need prevention.

According to the changes in animal production the future postgraduate student should be able to predict the effects of influence of incorrect conditions for animal organisms. Postgraduate student should remember that in Poland the development of genetic value of animals is not going paralleled with the increase of value of breeding environment. This is a reason of low productivity of animals and appearing of some nonspecific diseases.

Unfortunately the understanding of animal hygiene in different countries and parts of the world is not the same. Probably this is connected with late development of veterinary sciences, different tradition, different development of breeding or different climate conditions. This is why the programs of studies in animal hygiene are different.

In Poland and not only in Poland there is a need to carry scientific researches and university teaching of such a systems of animal production which do not cause the danger for animals health and also do not cause environment pollution. Apart from that it seems that in teaching of animal hygiene problems of disinfections, disinsection and deratization should be learned. More proper term of this subject is "Sanitary protection" (5).

At the very end I would like to inform you that in Poland since 1984 the meetings of the section of Animal and Environment Hygiene of Polish Society of Veterinary Science are taking place. Every year not only scientific problems but also problematic of teaching in animal hygiene, veterinary prevention and prophylaxis are discussed.

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