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408895

JPRS: 18,440

29 March 1963

OTS: 63-21456

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HUNGARIAN ANIMAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

by Laszlo Varnagy

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A NEW STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN
ANIMAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

[Following is the translation of an article by Laszlo Varnagy, Dr. in the Hungarian-language journal Magyar Allatorvosok Lapja (Hungarian Veterinary Journal), Vol XVII, No 3, Budapest, March 1963, pages 81-83.]

The animal health administration fulfills a threefold state administrative task. First, it provides the conditions in animal hygiene for the development, improvement and breeding of the animal stock, an important national resource. It is primarily concerned with those conditions which, in their significance, go beyond the scope of single agricultural establishments. The second important role of the animal health administration is in the field of public health, that is the prevention and eradication of animal diseases which are dangerous to man and the prevention of their spreading to humans. The third main task is in the field of agricultural foreign trade, mainly the prevention of the import of disease and the establishment and control of animal health requirements for export.

In order to enable the animal health administration to fulfill its tasks, legal provisions are needed which are up-to-date, reflect the achievements of science and are realistic at the same time. An animal health organization which can further the fulfillment of the legal provisions is also necessary.

For decades, the XIX. article of 1928 (XIX. t.c. of 1928) and the decree No 100,000/1922 F.M. [Földművelésügyi Minisztérium -- Department of Agriculture] were the main legal sources of the animal health administration. These were the first in Hungary to provide a comprehensive, uniform legal regulation for the administration of animal hygiene and have opened a new chapter in the development of the direction of animal health. These legal regulations were a pioneering achievement in Hungary. They have satisfied the need in animal hygiene for many years because they provided circumspect and exact legal regulations covering practically all aspects of animal health. Over the years the "decree hundred thousand" became the code of veterinaries and was known to animal breeders, legal and industrial specialist

as well. Its value is shown by the fact that several foreign countries based the organization of their animal health administration on it.

The social change after the war resulted in changes in our state administration. Apart from organizational changes, this was evident by the new scope given to the animal health regulation by the decree No 21/1953 (V.15.) M.T. [Minisztertanács -- Council of Ministers]. After it came into force, those sections of both the decree No 100,000/1932 F.M. and the XIX t.c. of 1928 lapsed which were supplanted by the new decree. Somewhat later, in 1954, the decree No 52/1952 (V.22.) M.T. provided a new basis for state compensation of damages which occurred in connection with regulations aiming at the suppression of animal diseases. As a consequence of these decrees it became necessary that the Secretary of Agriculture provide a detailed regulation for the animal hygiene administration which would serve as the legal basis for its work, similar to the role of the decree No 100,000/1932 F.M..

Work toward the establishment of a new code for the animal health administration began already in 1955. Detailed regulations of certain questions such as: the cattle certificate, the production and distribution of veterinary drugs and vaccines, the state compensation for damages, protection against fowl pest, TB and brucellosis have already been published. The opinion became very prevalent, however, that the new, detailed regulation of the animal hygiene administration should be published in a unified legal code. Because of the nature of the work, this resulted in an expected delay of several years. A certain legal uncertainty has perpetuated itself in some areas of the animal health administration because of this delay. Although those provisions of decree No 100,000/1932 F.M. which were not affected by the decree No 21/1953 (V.15.) M.T. were still in effect, the results of scientific research, practical experience, the changed economic structure and other factors altered our views on certain diseases, on their spreading and on the methods of their prevention over the years since the decree has been in effect. The animal health administration had to reflect these altered views, often without any legal basis, in the interest of our national economy. The position of the animal health administration was also made difficult by the fact that decree No 100,000/1932 F.M. has been amended and broadened over the years and the newer legal provisions were familiar mainly to long-practicing veterinarians only. During this time, the lack of legal provisions could only be countered by the animal health administration by its reliance on the solid establishment and disciplined work of its animal health organization.

The new law providing for the regulation of animal health, the "Animal Hygiene Statute" (further: Statute) has been completed and it was put into effect on 1 April 1962 by decree No 5/1962 (II.7.) F.M. By the time this article appears, the majority of veterinarians probably will have gotten acquainted already with the new legal provisions. It might be useful, however, to say a few words about the general nature, guiding principles and principal viewpoints of the Statute. The knowledge of these might be useful in the development of a uniform view

necessary for its further study, its enforcement and for the understanding of its legal provisions.

1/ Concerning the professional aspects of the Statute, its authors attempted to include all previous legal provisions which were judged to be up-to-date as well as all the new knowledge achieved through research and practical experience, the application of which would increase the efficiency of the animal health administration. The latter consideration is evident from the fact that the Statute evaluates the spreading possibilities of certain diseases which show distinctly altered patterns because of developments in technology, transportation and trade relations and also because of new agricultural structural changes as a consequence of the socialistic reorganization of the agriculture.

The professional content is also characterized by the fact that the Statute aims primarily at the prevention of animal diseases. While this is stressed on every occasion, a special chapter is devoted to the general rules of prevention. Furthermore, in the discussion of every single reportable disease a special section is devoted to special prophylactic rules. Since local hygienic conditions which have no effect on other animal farms are also of interest to the socialistic state administration, the section discussing general rules of prevention of disease contains animal hygiene regulations designed for the improvement of such local conditions also.

The expansion of professional content is evident in public health regulations as well. Of such nature are the standard public health rules for the reporting of infectious animal diseases having an anthrozo-zoonotic character. New, up-to-date directions for meat inspection are included, for example, newer techniques for fowl-meat inspection, the extension of veterinary control to meat products, canned goods, fishes, fish products, game meat, and the compulsory testing of pork for trichinella. Dairy milk marketing, the animal health requirements for milk-producing cows and the hygiene of farmers are also regulated. This expansion of the professional content of the Statute will certainly facilitate the improvement of public health through the animal hygiene administration.

The discussion of methods of laboratory testing endeavors to provide a basis for uniform nation-wide standards. The detailed regulation of the submission of test materials attempts to improve the effectiveness of laboratory work. These provisions are also an indication of the extension of the professional content.

Characteristic of the Statute is the fact that it contains rules concerning some diseases which did not have to be reported before (infectious anemia of horses, certain rotting diseases of butchered pigs, the white disease of bees, infectious abdominal dropsy of fishes). In addition to these, the steps to be taken toward the long-range elimination of some chronic diseases (TB, brucellosis), so important in livestock breeding, are discussed.

In composing the professional content, the editors of the Statute attempted to make the regulations enforceable. Experience shows that

regulations which are very difficult to carry out are usually not enforced. In spite of this, some sections will be found by many to be applicable only under ideal conditions. With these examples, it was attempted to show the goal of animal hygiene. At the same time, regulations were provided for the realistic enforcement of certain procedures under present conditions and at every stage of the further development.

2/ From the point of view of state administration, the Statute is built on that part of the governmental decree which provides that the local tasks of the animal health administration are to be carried out by the executive committees of councils and by the organs of the professional agricultural leadership. Therefore, in many instances, only a general regulation is provided within the framework of which the local organs must work out their own concrete rules. This is provided for the cases where animal hygiene procedures will have to vary with local conditions and requirements in order to be successful. Detailed regulations are provided by the Statute in every instance where the national animal health situation, public health or export interests require procedures which are uniform in every detail.

The authors of the Statute attempted to put executive authority in the hands of organs which are closest to the livestock farmers. Thus they attempted to cut down on red tape on one hand, and to develop the responsibility of local organizations on the other hand. Of course in cases where higher interests require or where more extensive regulations are necessary, authority had to be given to the organs of higher professional administration. In the delegation of authority, experience gained in previous years was taken into account.

Considering the state administrative content of the Statute, it is noteworthy that certain regulations show a differentiation whether they are applied to agricultural industries or small establishments. The Statute takes into consideration that, in combatting certain diseases, the constant veterinary supervision and special conditions of the agricultural industries make regulations possible and, at times, necessary which are different from those suitable for small establishments. Special rules are in effect for large agricultural farms for the prevention of animal diseases. The Statute also considers the new conditions of socialistic state industries (food industry, drug industry and of state commerce and a differentiation in this respect is also evident.

3/ In its structural design, the Statute is divided into two parts. The 14 chapters and 189 paragraphs of the first part contain the rules which regulate the tasks not only of agricultural professional administrative organizations but also of citizens, industries, co-operatives and other state organs. The second part discusses, in 25 supplements, the detailed operational regulations of agricultural professional administrative organs. This structure conforms to the current form of legal regulations and presumably facilitates the use of the