

The Veterinary Profession in the Australian Poultry Industry

Australia's isolation saw the poultry industry uniquely adapt to regional climates. By the 1940s poultry had become an important source of food or income, and a decade later geneticists had developed specific layer breeds and 'meat type' chickens. Major scientific advances in the development of chemotherapeutic agents and vaccines provided the platform for the expansion of the modern poultry industry. With intensification in housing, the emergence of important transmissible diseases demanded definition and strategic control measures or eradication.

By the 1960s, many industry multi-disciplined laboratories that serviced their vertically integrated operations were established. The veterinary profession now fills varied roles in government, vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturers, and the industry itself, as well as consultant/practitioners.

The poultry industry operates within a national policy of the Federal government that considers matters relating to quarantine and control of exotic diseases, registration of veterinary products, meat inspection, trade, research and development, as well as aid programmes abroad. Australia's policy of total quarantine to prevent the incursion of exotic diseases had been maintained until the late 1980s and late 1990s, when the introduction of overseas genetic breeding stock and vaccines, respectively, were permitted. State governments administer and provide services relating to veterinary health, extension and education, welfare issues, implementation of meat inspection, and research and development.

Before the 1960s, veterinary undergraduates had limited training in poultry medicine. Faculties of veterinary science at four Australian universities now admit undergraduates. Poultry research, supported by the poultry industry and the Federal government, is carried out at these and other universities and colleges. The pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturers contribute to the research and development and service of products essential for the poultry industry. Results of research are published and publicised widely. The *Australian Veterinary Journal* has published many such papers since the issue of December 1926 that was dedicated to diseases of poultry.

In 1961, the Australian Veterinary Poultry Association, a special interest group within the Australian Veterinary Association, was inaugurated to deal with the definition of respiratory diseases. The AVPA now has about 150 veterinary and non-veterinary members.

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April 2002