



Presented at the Research Congress 2013
De La Salle University Manila
March 7-9, 2013

EPIZOOTICS AND VETERINARY SCIENCE EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES: THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES, 1910-1919

Arleigh Ross D. Dela Cruz, Ph.D.
History Department, De La Salle University Manila

Abstract:

The Philippines is an agricultural country that is highly dependent on the use of draft animals to cultivate farmlands. Although the country has an abundant supply of domestic animals for agricultural work, a large number of these domestic animals became susceptible to communicable diseases. During the American period, animal contagions decimated thousands of domestic bovine and equine animals in the Philippines. American colonial officials identified six epizootics or dangerous and highly communicable animal contagions. These diseases were glanders, surra, anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, and hemorrhagic septicemia. These contagions infected and killed hundreds or even thousands of local and imported bovine and equine domestic animals in the Philippines, particularly carabao, cattle, horses and ponies. To immediately address this agricultural menace, the American colonial government instituted a campaign to eradicate the spread of animal contagions in the Philippines. Key to the success of the American colonial project against epizootics was the creation of a pool of veterinary experts schooled in the science of veterinary medicine. It was unfortunate, however, that the number of well-trained American veterinary experts was not enough to win the war against infectious animal contagions in the Philippines. Dean Worcester and Dr. Archibald Ward, two American colonial officials in the Philippines, developed an excellent solution to the problem by establishing a veterinary school in the Philippines in 1910. This paper discusses how the epizootics problem in the Philippines led to the establishment of the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science. It also explains the significant developments and changes that occurred in the College from its birth in Pandacan, Manila in 1910 up to its transfer to Los Baños, Laguna in 1919.

Key Words: Veterinary Science; Epizootics; University of the Philippines; Dean Worcester; Domestic animals

1. INTRODUCTION

Veterinary science education was still unknown in the Philippines prior to the American occupation of the Philippines in 1898. Moreover, there was no trained Filipino veterinarian when the Americans launched its campaign against animal diseases in the Philippines. As an initial solution to the problem, the American colonial government brought its corps of veterinary experts from the United States to help control and eradicate animal contagions in the country. It was unfortunate, however, that the number of well-trained American veterinarians was not



enough to win the war against infectious animal contagions in the Philippines. American colonial officials developed an excellent solution to the problem by establishing a veterinary school in the Philippines in 1910.

Two coffee table books published by the University of the Philippines Los Baños mention the development of veterinary science in the Philippines. The first entitled *UPLB: A Century of Challenges and Achievements* by Dr. Fernando A. Bernardo (2007) talks about the historical development of the University of Philippines Los Baños from the time that it started as the College of Agriculture. The book narrates important events in the history of the University of the Philippines Los Baños under different administrations. Dr. Bernardo allotted a few pages of the book on the history of the College of Veterinary Science. However, it is too short to be able to provide an extensive discussion about the evolution of the College. The second book is a pictorial history of the Los Baños campus also written by Dr. Bernardo (2007). The book shows pictures of the old College of Veterinary Science in Pandacan, Manila and Los Baños, Laguna. But just like the first book, it does not provide an extensive discussion of the history of the College of Veterinary Science.

This paper provides a historical discussion on the development of veterinary science education and the first veterinary college in the Philippines. It examines how the American colonial government solved the animal contagion problem through the establishment of the College of Veterinary Science of the University of the Philippines. It discusses the significant events that happened to the veterinary college since its establishment in 1910 until its transfer to Laguna in 1919. The study used archival materials from the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science. It also used government records and scientific journals to reconstruct the important events that led to the development of veterinary science college in the Philippines.

2. THE BEGINNINGS OF A VETERINARY COLLEGE, 1910-1912

Animal contagions decimated thousands of domestic bovine and equine animals in the Philippines during the American period. American colonial officials identified glanders, surra, anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, and hemorrhagic septicemia as the most infectious animal diseases. Glanders and surra are communicable diseases infecting horses and equine animals while anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, and hemorrhagic septicemia are infectious diseases common among bovine animals like carabao and cattle. The ravages caused by these contagions were well recorded in the official reports of the American colonial government in the Philippines. Data reveal that these epizootics or communicable animal contagions caused the decimation of thousands and thousands of local and imported bovine and equine domestic animals in the Philippines (United States Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904; Miller 1932; Mayo 1925 ; Bureau of Agriculture 1926).



During the first decade of American rule in the Philippines, all veterinarians involved in the control of colonial epizootics came from the United States. This was necessary because prior to the coming of the Americans in 1898, there was no veterinary school in the Philippines. Moreover, there were no trained Filipino veterinarians at that time who can help solve the problem. Unfortunately, however, the colonial government did not also have a sufficient number of American veterinarians to implement the animal disease control campaign in the provinces. The majority of American veterinarians who found work in the Philippines did not stay longer than three years. Most of them immediately returned home after the expiration of their contracts. The short supply of well-educated and efficient American veterinarians in the Philippines was due to a number of reasons. First, the Philippines was so far away from the United States (Philippine Veterinary Medical Association 1941; Gomez 1935). Second, foreign veterinarians needed sufficient training on the nature of animal contagions and veterinary science before they could be assigned for veterinary work. Since all American veterinarians hired for veterinary work in the Philippines did not speak and understand the local languages and most were also unfamiliar with local conditions, they did not explain to Filipino farmers and livestock owners the importance of their actions to control the spread of colonial epizootics (Sumulong 1936; United States Bureau of Insular Affairs 1905 and 1910 ; Gomez 1948)

A third reason was the failure of the colonial government to recruit more American veterinarians to work in the Philippines. They offered adequate salaries to those willing to accept appointments and work in the Philippines. Unfortunately, the number of American veterinarians willing to work in the Philippines was not enough to fill-in the huge demand for veterinary experts in the Philippines (Ferriols 1929). And the last reason was the high cost of hiring American veterinarians. A well-trained and highly educated American veterinarian was paid high salaries that the government found difficult to give. At some point, the continuous recruitment and appointment of veterinarians from the United States drained the Insular Treasury (United States Bureau of Insular Affairs 1911). The difficulty in hiring American veterinarians for the Philippines was further aggravated when the United States Congress enacted the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. Under this Act, all cattle, sheep, swine and goats intended for export and interstate commerce in the United States needed to undergo ante-mortem and post-mortem examination while hog meat for export required examination. The United States government appropriated an annual budget of \$3,000,000 for the enforcement of law (San Agustin 1936). It became more difficult for the colonial government to recruit American veterinarians to work in the Philippines because the Act opened better opportunities for work in the United States. A starting salary of \$1,200 to \$1,400 in the United States enticed many American veterinarians in the Philippines to give up their meager-paying jobs and go back to the United States (Ferriols 1929 and United States Bureau of Insular Affairs 1908).

The scarcity of well-trained veterinarians in the Philippines was a lingering problem of the country for many years (Worcester 1930). Cognizant of the need to address the problem of securing competent American veterinarians, Dean C. Worcester, Secretary of the Interior, made a brilliant suggestion in 1907. He recommended, "... that early consideration should be given [to]



the question of the advisability of establishing here [in the Philippines] a veterinary school” (United States Bureau of Insular Affairs 1908). The efforts of Secretary Worcester and Dr. Archibald Ward, chief veterinarian of the Bureau of Agriculture, bore fruit with the establishment of the College of Veterinary Science together with six other colleges of the University of the Philippines (Ferriols 1929). Act No. 1870 or *An Act for the Purpose of Founding a University for the Philippine islands, Giving it Corporate Existence, Providing for a Board of regents, Defining the Board’s responsibilities and Duties, Providing Higher and professional Instruction, and for other purposes*, enacted in a special session of the Philippine Legislature on June 18, 1908, provided for the creation of the University of the Philippines.

The College of Veterinary Science was established to train and develop a body of competent veterinarians “whom the country will depend on for the control and eradication of animal epidemics that constantly threaten her animal population” and who could “give advice to the owner[s] of livestock ... [on] various diseases and ailments” decimating the domestic animal population in the Philippines (San Agustin 1936 and Boynton 1915) .

The campus of the College of Veterinary Science was located in Pandacan, Manila adjoining the quarantine yards of the Bureau of Agriculture. Three reinforced concrete buildings constituted the campus of the College. The site was near the Pandacan Animal Quarantine Station. (San Agustin 1936 and Boynton 1915). The College of Veterinary Science also maintained an animal clinic located between Rizal Avenue and Calle Tayuman. In the animal clinic, students diagnosed, prescribed and treated different cases of animal diseases under the supervision of their instructors and professors.

The College of Veterinary Science was authorized to accept forty (40) first year students every academic year. Unfortunately, when the College formally opened in June 1910, only six students enrolled. For academic year 1911-1912, there were only 11 first year students and 3 advanced students enlisted for the course. For academic years 1912-1913 and 1913-1914, the enrollees increased to 27 and 31 students, respectively. For academic year 1914-1915, 1915-1916 and 1916-1917, the number of enrollees increased to 28, 30 and 35 students, respectively. Although the figure show a marked increase in the number of students enrolling in the College, it was still disappointing because it was way below the average number of students that the College was capable of accommodating every academic year which was forty (40). The low enrollment of students was due to the fact that many students did not see a bright future for the veterinary profession in the country. For many students, there was no significant role for veterinarians in the Philippines except as doctors of carabaos, ridiculed in many instances with the irreverent label of *Doctor Kalabaw* (Buencamino 1977).

3. THE VETERINARY COLLEGE MOVES TO SAN LAZARO, MANILA, 1912-1919

Many students complained on the difficulty of conducting their classes in two widely separated campuses. Dr. Archibald Ward, Dean of the College, addressed this problem in a letter TPHS-009



to University of the Philippines President Murray Bartlett on May 13, 1911 (Yutuc 1960). In his letter, Dr. Ward recommended the relocation of the College to a bigger site in San Lazaro, Manila. Dr. Ward's request was presented to the Board of Regents during its meeting on May 17, 1911. After studying the matter carefully, the Board of Regents authorized the transfer of the College of Veterinary Science to San Lazaro District at the corner of Tayuman Street and Rizal Avenue, adjoining the San Lazaro Hospital. The new site was perfect for the College because clinical materials needed by veterinary science students were available at the San Lazaro Race Track, such as horse manure, blood, urine and other body discharges (Yutuc 1960).

The San Lazaro campus occupied a two-story building that housed the faculty offices, classrooms and anatomy laboratory. The first floor of the building was used for anatomy dissection classes. The San Lazaro site had large sheds and stables that served as clinics for large and small animals. It had properly screened stables for animal quarantine. It also had separate building where animals were operated on and where operating instruments were sterilized. Another separate building located at one corner of the College grounds was used as laboratory and recitation room.

4. THE VETERINARY COLLEGE TRANSFERS TO LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA

Practical reasons drove Dr. E. S. D. Merchant, Acting Dean of the College, to request for the construction of an additional building for the College. He found the San Lazaro campus no longer adequate for the student body. In a letter to University of the Philippines President Ignacio Villamor dated September 13, 1917, he requested for the allocation of P20,000 to be used for the construction of the additional veterinary building. In the said letter, he also recommended the return of the College to Pandacan, Manila as it was more beneficial for the students if the College was returned there. The Pandacan campus was closer to the other colleges of the University where students took their other subjects (Yutuc 1960).

In the 169th meeting of the Board of Regents on February 14, 1918, the Board approved the construction of the veterinary building and the possible transfer of the College. Unfortunately, when the plan was discussed, the Board of Regents did not return the College to its original location in Pandacan, Manila. Instead, the Board ordered the transfer of the College to Los Baños, Laguna. The Board believed that it was more beneficial if the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science was relocated near the College of Agriculture which was in Los Baños, Laguna. The transfer of the College of Veterinary Science to Los Baños, Laguna promised a closer working relationship with the College of Agriculture. The relocation of the College in Laguna was in keeping with the common practice in most American universities where the campuses of the agriculture course and the veterinary science course were adjacent or near one another (Yutuc 1960 and Sumulong 1936). Students and faculty members opposed the transfer of the College to Los Baños, Laguna. Unfortunately, the University administration did not accept their reasons. The College was formally transferred to Laguna in 1919.



5. FILIPINO VETERINARIANS PRODUCED BY THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENCE, 1914-1918

The College of Veterinary Science trained the most competent Filipino veterinarians in the Philippines during the American period. Despite of the low number of students interested to study veterinary science, the College was able to produce the best veterinarians in the Philippines starting in 1914. Some of the prominent graduates of the College from 1914 to 1919 included Dr. Angel Gomez (DVM Class of 1914), Dr. Ildefonso Patdu (DVM Class of 1915), Dr. Teodulo Topacio (DVM Class of 1915), Dr. Gregorio San Agustin (DVM Class of 1916), Dr. Manuel Sumulong, Dr. Juan Generoso (DVM Class of 1917) and Dr. Federico Jardiniano (DVM Class of 1918). These Filipino veterinarians became important pillars of Philippine veterinary science because after graduating from the College, they served as professors and deans of the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science. They also became directors of the Bureau of Animal Industry and heads of the different departments under the Bureau of Animal Industry. Graduates of the College also became pioneering scientists and researchers of the country particularly on the diagnosis of infectious animal diseases and the discovery of vaccines against epizootics.

6. CONCLUSION

An important response of the American colonial government to win the battle against epizootics was the creation of a veterinary college. The creation of the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science by virtue of Act No. 1870 of the Philippine Commission on June 18, 1908 paved the way for the development and training of Filipino veterinarians. Tasked to create a pool of expert veterinarians to control and eradicate animal contagions, the Veterinary College was one of several colleges established under the University of the Philippines. Six Filipino students enrolled when the College formally opened in 1910. Although the establishment of the Veterinary College was a priority of the American colonial government, it did not receive popular support from Filipino students and the University of the Philippines administration during the first few decades of its existence. The College faced two major challenges as an independent unit of the University. First, it suffered low enrollment because students did not see a bright future for the veterinary profession in the country. For many students, there was no significant role for veterinarians in the Philippines except as doctors of carabaos, ridiculed in many instances with the irreverent label of *Doctor Kalabaw*. And second, the College faced its unexpected transfer from San Lazaro, Manila to Los Baños, Laguna in 1919 because of the lack of available building space. But despite of the low number of students and graduates of the College, it was able to produce the best and the brightest veterinarians in the Philippines. Considered as the first veterinary school in Southeast Asia, the University of the Philippines College of Veterinary Science produced outstanding graduates who became pioneers of Philippine veterinary science research and education.



7. REFERENCES

- Bernardo, Fernando A. (2007). *UPLB: A Century of Challenges and Achievements*. Los Baños: University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association.
- _____. (2007). *Pictorial History of UPLB*. Los Baños: University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association.
- Buencamino, Victor. (1977). *Memoirs of Victor Buencamino*. Mandaluyong: Jorge Vargas Filipiniana Foundation.
- Bureau of Agriculture. (1926). "An Order Regulating the Handling of Dangerous and Communicable Animal Diseases," *The Philippine Agricultural Review* 19: 377-386
- Ferriols, Vicente.(1929). "A Brief Resume of Rinderpest Control Work in the Philippines." *Philippine Journal of Agriculture*. 393-409.
- Gomez, Angel K.(1948). "Eradication and Control of Rinderpest in the Philippine Islands." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 113, no.857: 109-116.
- _____. (1935). "Development of Veterinary Medicine in the Philippines." *Bulletin of National Research Council* : 340-343
- Mayo, Katherine. (1925). *The Isles of Fear: The Truth about the Philippines*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company
- Miller, Hugo H. (1932). *Principles of Economics Applied to the Philippines*. Boston, New York, Chicago, London, Atlanta, Dallas, Columbus, San Francisco: Ginn and Company.
- Philippine Veterinary Medical Association.(1941). "Opening Address of Dr. Vicente Ferriols, President of the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association, February 20, 1940." *Philippine Journal of Animal Industry* 8, no. 3 : 195-204.
- San Agustin, Gregorio. (1936). "Meat Inspection in the Philippines." *Philippine Journal of Animal Industry* 3, no. 6: 517-523.
- _____. (1936). "Address by Gregorio San Agustin." *The Philippine Journal of Animal Industry* 3, no. 2 : 53-55.
- Students of the University of the Philippines. (1915). *Philippinensian*. Manila: Students of the University of the Philippines.
- Sumulong, Manuel D. (1936). "The Establishment and Growth of the College of Veterinary Science." *Philippine Journal of Animal Industry* 3, no.2 : 77-135.
- United States. Bureau of Insular Affairs. War Department. (1904). *Report of the Philippine Commission*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- _____.(1906). *Report of the Philippine Commission, 1905*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- _____. (1908). *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1907*. 3 parts. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- _____. (1910). *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1909*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- _____.(1912). *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1911*.
- TPHS-009



Presented at the Research Congress 2013
De La Salle University Manila
March 7-9, 2013

Washington: Government Printing Office.
University of the Philippines (1960). *The College of Veterinary Medicine: Golden Jubilee Commemorative Volume 1960*. Diliman: University of the Philippines.
Worcester, Dean C. *The Philippines: Past and Present New Edition in One Volume with Biographical Sketch and Four Additional Chapters by Ralston Hayden*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.