The industrialisation of pig production has meant that traditional approaches to veterinary medicine are un-
able to cope with the demands that arise in these systems. Scientific training has by necessity been directed to-
towards the individual animal rather than the group and has neglected the understanding of the complex relationships be-

twixt man, animal, organisms and the environment.

The concept of disease prevention has, by the nature of its definition, implied procedures to this end but a

more positive definition would be the maximisation of the animal physiological function. If the veterinary

surgeon learns to look after the pig he in this respect must become an integral part of the production and manage-

ment team being required to investigate ill-defined disease production mechanisms and appreciate the whole

farm situation and its associated inadequacies. To

maintain this positive role, the goal must be to help in

the protection of the capital outlay of the pig unit and maximise the return on the investment. This must

be carried out within accepted welfare practices.

Experiences in providing such a service to 82 intensive pig units have indicated a number of new areas of

veterinary appreciation.

Man: Management

With increased intensification of livestock production new concepts in disease control are being developed but

to make this effective becomes an exercise in education and communication - the art as distinct from the

science. Man management often becomes a limiting factor to the achievement of high levels of health and

prevention. The veterinarian must be readily accessible to the farmer in his daily routine and be able to

diagnose those subtle problems that may arise in the pig unit and the pigs. Human relations play a great part in the control of

animal diseases by ensuring that personnel have an understanding, appreciation and awareness of their job and

problems.

In some cases the solutions to problems will involve house visits, where the capital investments, the necessity of which must be justified. The

veterinary advisor must have the ability, personality, and commitment to provide such services at all levels and it is only when such standards are achieved that the operator will be completely successful.

Education

Veterinary education is essential to provide the expertise that modern day pig production requires and this can only be gained through the services of veterinary professionals. The importance of continuing education is vital. There is a need for the veterinarian to be up-to-date with the latest developments in disease control, nutrition, and management of the pig farm. The veterinarian must be able to keep abreast of the latest research and developments in the field to provide the best possible care for the pigs.

Economics

Preventive medicine in ultimate terms describes a service offered to the pig farmer, the cost of which is less than the economic return which it yields. By comparing target figures for any production or disease parameter against the actual ones, a cost in terms of lost production or death can be determined.

Summary

An advisory service to pig farmers was started in 1969 from within general practice. During the period of

1960-81, this service was available to 103 pig farms (average herd size of 225 pigs) and 82 of these

received regular advisory visits (average 6 per annum).