

THE VETERINARY SCIENCE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

AGNES CHITSIDZO CHIKONZO

Veterinary Library, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

This paper first gives a general view of the University of Zimbabwe from the time it was established in 1957 to the present. It then gives a brief background of the Faculty of Veterinary Science and lastly the Veterinary Science Library, its structure, services offered and problems encountered. The Veterinary Science Library is a fairly new library and it is hoped that this Conference presents an opportune forum for learning and sharing ideas with other Libraries.

BACKGROUND

The University of Zimbabwe (then die University of Rhodesia) was established in 1957 with only three faculties, Arts, Social Studies and Science, and sixty eight students. At independence in 1980, the University of Zimbabwe had a student population of 2 240. In January of the same year, the Faculties of Agriculture, Commerce and Law were established, these disciplines having been previously included in the Faculties of Science and Social Science respectively.

At present, the University of Zimbabwe has ten faculties and student enrolment currently stands at 9 300. This is mainly due to the rapid expansion in secondary education soon after independence as well as the fact that for a very long time, the University of Zimbabwe was the sole tertiary institution of its kind in the country. Recent years have seen the establishment of three new universities and plans are underway for the setting up of yet another university to make five.

In 1982 the Faculty of Veterinary Science was established.

THE FACULTY OF VETERINARY SCIENCE

Background

The Faculty of Veterinary Science was established in 1982 with a student intake of eighteen to provide training for veterinarians to serve the livestock industry in Zimbabwe and other countries in the SADCC region. Current enrolment stands at one hundred and twenty students.

The Faculty offers a five year programme leading to the degree of Bachelor of Veterinary Science. The Faculty building was financed by the European Economic Community (EEC) from funds allocated for both national and regional development. Equipment was provided by the EEC, Great Britain and Australia.

Departments

Presently there are three departments in the Faculty. These are **Pre-Clinical** (Biochemistry, Anatomy, Physiology and Animal Production), **Paraclinical** (Pathology, Microbiology, Parasitology and Pharmacology) and **Clinical Veterinary Studies** (Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Public Health).

Library

The Veterinary Science Library was also set up in 1982 to serve the Veterinary Science Faculty. The Library was initially set up to exclusively serve the faculty but recent developments have seen the library extend its services to the Faculties of Agriculture (par-

ticularly the Department of Animal Science) Science and Medicine. It is now also open to all Veterinarians and members of the Zimbabwe Veterinary Association (Z.V.A.).

Library Structure

The Veterinary Library is one of the six branch libraries of the University of Zimbabwe. Branch Libraries serve particular faculties and in most instances are situated separately from the Main Library. The Branch Libraries are governed by the University Library Committee and the Librarians are directly responsible to the University Librarian.

Acquisition

Each year, the Veterinary Science Library is allocated funds and it is the Librarian's responsibility to acquire and process all new material. All processing is done in the Main Library.

Book selection is done by all interested parties ie. students, library staff and faculty staff. Selections by faculty staff are forwarded to the Librarian through the respective Chairpersons of Departments. Likewise, students forward their selections through the Chairperson of the Z.V.A. The Senior Library assistant is responsible for filling in the order forms and sending these to the Main Library for processing.

Users

The Veterinary Science Library is open to students, members of staff, veterinarians and members of the Zimbabwe Veterinary Association.

Students are allowed to borrow a maximum of five books and academic staff up to a maximum of ten books. Members of the Z.V.A. and veterinarians, who form 15% of our users, are treated as approved readers. This means that they can use the library for reference purposes only.

Material in the Library

At the moment, the library houses 4,728 books. These are categorised as follows:

1. Reference Books

These must be read in the library only and are not available for borrowing eg dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias etc.

2. Overnight Loan

We have fifty titles (10% of total collection) in this category. These are the most heavily used books and must be returned to the library the following day before 9:00am. Failure to comply attracts a fine of \$1.00 per hour.

3. Short Term Loan

This material may be borrowed for three days only. This is to ensure that at least every user has the chance of using whatever material is available in the library. The fine for overdue books in this category is \$5.00 per day.

Periodicals

The Veterinary Science Library subscribes to forty six titles, receives five titles as donations and ten titles in exchange for the Zimbabwe Veterinary Journal.

Services

1. The Veterinary Science Library offers a CD-ROM service and this is available to all library users. At the moment, the Library subscribes to four databases namely: **AgriCola, Applied Science & Technology, BeastCD and VetCD.**

2. There is also a photocopying machine which is available to all library users. Periodical literature is the most used and various literature searches are offered. Photocopying is offered at 25c a page.

3. Audio tapes are also available and these can be borrowed overnight by staff members.

4. A current awareness service is in place for faculty members. Faculty members are informed on a regular basis of every new journal or book coming into the library.

5. Books and journal articles that are not available in the library can be sourced from other libraries through the Inter-Library Loan service. Use of the I.L.L. service is normally restricted to staff, final year and post graduate students.

6. At the beginning of every academic year, library orientation tours are given to all first year students in groups of ten. This is to enable users to familiarise with the services and resources in the library.

Problems experienced

1. CD-ROM service

The personal computer in the Veterinary Science Library is an old model with an 80286 processor. The machine is thus very slow and users are usually put off by the low response times.

A request has been submitted to the Faculty for the provision of at least two personal computers with a minimum of 486 processors, 4MB memory and at least 400 MB of disk space. This would not only improve the CD-ROM service but will also allow the Library to load MEDLINE in response to Faculty staff requests. Acquisition of these personal computers would also enable the library to set up a local area network (LAN) linking faculty staff members to the library's personal computers and thereby obviating the need for staff to come to the library for searches.

2. Lack of sitting space

Expansion in student enrolment has not been accompanied by corresponding infrastructural expansion and as a result, the one hundred and twenty students in the faculty have to share the library's thirty seven seats. During

examination time when the library is at its busiest, students have had to sit outside the library owing to the lack of sitting space. This problem has been presented to the Faculty and plans are underway to expand the library and to increase its seating capacity.

3. Baggage Area

Since bags are not allowed into the library, users have to leave their bags on the floor by the entrance and this creates a rather unacceptable impression of the library. Consideration is being given to the provision of a baggage storage area.

4. Security

Owing to the increase in the number of books and journals the library is losing, the need for improved security has been communicated to the Main Library. A tattle tape machine is desperately required but the lack of funds has meant that this machine will remain unavailable for the foreseeable future.

5. Books

Veterinary Science books are very expensive and particularly so as very few of them are published locally. A request has been put to the Faculty to assist in the acquisition of reading materials as the funds made available by the Main Library are barely sufficient to meet demand.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Erica and all those who made this Conference possible. I would also like to express the hope that relationships established here will continue to be nurtured and that as we share ideas and experiences we are able to improve the services we offer to our users.

Tatenda. I thank you.