

Complete Funding of Proposed Veterinary Teaching Hospital Vital

IF Oklahoma is to have a college of veterinary medicine, it ought to be a good one. If we are to have a good one, it will take money to provide essential facilities and staff.

Oklahoma needs a good school of veterinary medicine to serve the livestock industry, which produces more than \$1 billion a year in new wealth for our state, as well as the large number of people who keep pets, horses or other animals.

There is a college of veterinary medicine at Oklahoma State University, but it is not regarded as a good one. In fact, the school has never been fully accredited since it was founded in 1947. Apprehension exists that an accreditation team due to inspect the school this month may put it on official probation.

Dr. Richard Poole, acting president of OSU, says the progress in trying to bring the veterinary school to the level needed to serve adequately the students and peo-

ple of Oklahoma has been "uneven" ever since it was established.

"Within the past four or five years, we have made enormous strides toward reaching the desired level of quality and service," Poole said, "through reduced faculty-student ratios, construction of the diagnostic laboratory and through improvement of curricula and teaching materials.

"We are within sight of removing the last major obstacle, by construction of a teaching hospital," he added. "We are most grateful to the governor for his support and to the legislature for 1976, which appropriated \$2.75 million to initiate construction of the much-needed \$9.15 million teaching hospital."

The future of the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine depends to a large extent upon continued funding of the facility and its completion at the earliest possible date. Officials hope funding may be completed within three legislative sessions. Funding within this time period would minimize the impact of steeply rising costs, due to inflation.

Not all states have schools of veterinary medicine. Those that do have accepted out-of-state students, with their home states paying part of tuition costs.

Increasing interest on the part of Oklahoma students for this type of training has been indicated. The present enrollment is 250, with 60 due to be graduated this year.

Well-trained veterinarians are in demand, with some graduates offered beginning salaries up to \$20,000 a year. The American Veterinary Medical Association has reported the number of veterinarians in the United States has more than doubled since 1958, to exceed 30,000. It adds that as many as 8,000 more may be needed by 1980.

Oklahoma has at least three times as many domestic animals as there are people in the state, and the health of the people is related to the health of animals.

Animals need doctors, just as people do, and complete funding of this proposed teaching hospital is needed to train them to meet required standards.