European experience of organizing veterinary services: lessons for Ukraine

Summary

The paper is devoted to defining the trends of development of the veterinary services system in Ukraine based on studying the EU experience of public administration in the field of veterinary medicine. The structural and functional provision of veterinary services activity in different EU countries have been investigated and generalized. The experience of changes in organization of veterinary institutional bodies, effected in the EU member states in order to comply with the world and European requirements, has been studied. The legal framework, functions, forces and the process of public institution reforms that form the national system of veterinary medicine in Ukraine have been characterized. The main risks and threats arising from the system reform are specified and their nature and significance for the national security assessed.

Keywords: public administration, field of veterinary medicine, EU experience of veterinary services organization, structure, tasks, legal framework of veterinary services of Ukraine.

Problem statement

The issue of control over the safety and quality of food products is increasingly gaining importance worldwide in the recent decades. The safety of foodstuffs and food raw materials is one of the key factors that determine the health of the country’s population. Food product safety and high quality is a prerequisite for protection of citizens’ vital interests. Identifying the needs of the state as to safeguarding public health and ensuring a stable favorable epidemic and epizootic situation in the country is the key to enhanced human potential and sustainable development of the society.
Recent research and publications analysis

A search for solution to problems of ensuring the quality and safety of food products and organizing veterinary services in Ukraine was started in the works by: A. Abramov, P. Dostoievskyi, V. Gorgeiev, V. Herman, A. Ilchenko, V. Khomenko, M. Kosenko, V. Lisovenko, P. Verbytskyi1, dedicated to issues of the state veterinary and sanitary control and supervision aimed to ensure a favorable situation with animal diseases in Ukraine; P. Sabluk, T. Lozynska, covering different aspects of agricultural policy development, provision of food security of the population; V. Bakumenko, N. Nyzhnyk, N. Meltiukhova, H. Odintsova and other researchers, who have addressed the subject range of control in public administration.

The paper objective

The paper objective is to identify the developmental trends of the veterinary services system in Ukraine based on a study of the EU public administration experience in the field of veterinary medicine.

The paper main discourse

One of the lines of Ukraine’s integration into the EU is taking the appropriate sanitary and phytosanitary measures. In this regard, the Ukrainian scientists and government officials face a serious challenge of adapting the domestic veterinary medicine.

The European Union, providing examples of integral systems of legislative support for many sectors of society, uses one of the best models of sanitary control, which guarantees a high level of animal product quality and safety.

The veterinary services of the EU member states play a key role in the implementation of the sanitary and food policy. Therefore, joining the EU internal market and future membership in the Community impose clear-cut requirements on candidate countries as regards veterinary medicine, which should be able to effectively protect the environment, human health and the interests of animal product consumers.

Requirements to veterinary services of the countries wishing to join the European Union are based on a number of principles, according to which harmonization of measures for animal health includes:

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— protection against epizootics;
— assurance of zootecchnical and public health;
— focus on achievement of results that are set by the relevant directives;
— guarantee of a sanitary safety level equivalent to that of all the European consumers;
— an integrated approach.

The EU does not put forward strict requirements to the structure of veterinary services; rather, the attention is focused on the interests related to their missions.

The analysis of data from foreign literature has shown that the veterinary medicine authorities of the EU member states are located at central and local levels.

Veterinary institutions of the central level are responsible for negotiations with the EU institutions and development of regulations. They may be part of a ministry (for example, the Ministry of Agriculture – in France, Finland, Portugal, Poland, or the Ministry of Health – in Italy). Veterinary institutions of the central level can belong to several ministries as well, e.g. veterinary institutions in charge of animal health protection are subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Organizations aiming to ensure food safety may be part of the Ministry of Health like in Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden, or belong to the Ministry of Consumer Protection (Austria). In Germany, Italy, and Spain, the influence of veterinary institutions of the central level is limited, part of their powers being transferred to territorial authorities.

Veterinary institutions of the local level are responsible for implementation of safety and healthcare measures and are part of:
— individual state veterinary services (Greece);
— public services, which are staffed with private veterinarians (Austria, Denmark);
— regional and/or municipal authorities (Finland, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Sweden – in this case the central veterinary institutions have no direct impact on local veterinary services).

The research into the structural and functional activity of veterinary services in different EU countries allows making the following conclusions.

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3 Ю.В. Чабанова, Забезпечення відповідності державного управління ветеринарною медициною в Україні до умов євроінтеграції, [w:] В.В.Корженко, Н.М.Мельтяхова, Г.С. Одинцова, Тенденції та перспективи європейської інтеграції України: державно-управлінські виміри, Вид-во ХарНРІ НАДУ „Магістр” 2007, c. 212–231.
4 Seminar on National Veterinary Services (Private and State) and European Union Requirements, OIE, Final report, Croatia, 24-28 June 2000, Zagreb 2000, p. 220.
5 Г.С. Одинцова, Ю.В. Чабанова, Структурно-функціональне…, с. 14–22.
In all the reviewed countries, veterinary services are public and belong to the executive power branch. The structure of the veterinary institutions in the investigated countries is in compliance with the administrative division of their states.

A common characteristic feature is an increasing role of good-quality animal products, which are safe in terms of veterinary and sanitary. It puts the food security of consumers to forefront of the main veterinary services objectives. The mentioned change in priorities has led to emergence of the national and regional public administration structures in the field of veterinary medicine (Table 1).

Table 1. The authorities providing veterinary policy in the EU countries and Ukraine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Levels of public administration in veterinary medicine</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Territorial</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>French Agency for Sanitary Safety of Products General Directorate of Food</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional and District Veterinary Services Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>State Veterinary Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional and district veterinary administrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Veterinary and Food Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal and district veterinary authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Department of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District State Veterinary Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Department of Veterinary and Food</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Departments of Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>State Food and Consumer Service of Ukraine</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Regional and District State Food and Consumer Service Departments</td>
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</table>

For example, the Department of Public Health has been created at the central level in Lithuania, Veterinary and Food Departments – in Latvia and Estonia.

However, not all the countries’ the territorial level has been affected by these changes: only Estonia has public health departments of the regional level. In other countries the task of ensuring public health is executed by divisions or individual employees of regional and district veterinary administrations.

The EU member states introduced such transformations as implementation of the concept “from stable to table”, inclusion of veterinary public health on the list of basic tasks of veterinary medicine, expansion of control and supervision functions of veterinary services.

However, implementation of the EU requirements in the studied countries was realized in different ways: in the majority of countries (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania) – through carrying out structural reforms, and in some countries (Slovakia) – through the development and implementation of appropriate programs that are executed by the state veterinary authorities in collaboration with other executive and public organizations.

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7 Г.С. Одіцьова, Ю.В. Чабанова, Структурно-функціональне..., с. 14–22.
8 Seminar on National Veterinary Services..., p. 220.
9 Ю.В. Чабанова, Концепція розвитку державної ветеринарної адміністрації Республіки Словаччина, Актуальні проблеми державного управління: Збірник наукових праць. 2007, №2, с. 91–100.
Before 2016, Ukraine’s public administration of veterinary medicine was realized by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine, the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine and its territorial organs\(^\text{10}\).

According to the Law of Ukraine “On Veterinary Medicine”, the main tasks of the country’s veterinary medicine were as follows\(^\text{11}\):

— protection of the state from the bringing of infectious diseases agents from the territory of other countries or from the quarantine zone;

— prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of infectious, invasive and non-infectious diseases of animals;

— state veterinary and sanitary control and supervision of the quality and safety of products of animal (and plant on the markets) origin; movements including exportation, importation of objects of the state veterinary and sanitary control and supervision; adequacy to the authorized veterinary and sanitary requirements;

— protection of population against diseases common to animals and humans;

— veterinary and sanitary examination of products of animal (and plant on the markets) origin, used for nutrition and manufacturing of foodstuffs as well as ready feeds, feeds of plant and animal origin, and feed additives;

— state veterinary and sanitary control over the quality of veterinary preparations, substances, ready feeds, feed additives and means of veterinary medicine;

— bacteriological, radiological, parasitological and toxicological control of production of animal origin at meat-packing plants, re-processors of foodstuffs and food raw materials of animal origin, poultry factories, refrigerators and storehouses of all forms of ownership;

— continuing education of the veterinary medicine specialists;

— practical application of veterinary medicine achievements.

Elaboration of the legislative framework for veterinary medicine in Ukraine began in the 1991 after proclamation of the country’s independence and continues up to now. Today, relations in the Ukrainian veterinary medicine are regulated by more than 100 legal acts: Laws of Ukraine, Decrees of the President of Ukraine, Ordinances of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, regulations, instructions, recommendations, rules, veterinary and sanitary requirements of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy, etc.\(^\text{12}\)


\(^{11}\) Закон України «Про внесення змін до Закону України «Про ветеринарну медицину» від 16 листопада 2006, ст. 53.

Since 1993, Ukraine is a member of Office International des Epizooties and cooperates with other international organizations such as World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, Codex Alimentarius\(^\text{13}\).

For realization of the above-mentioned tasks, the territorial organs of the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine and the Regional Services of State Veterinary and Sanitary Control on the State Border and Transport were created at the central territorial level (Fig. 1). The territorial organs of the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine included regional, municipal and district departments of state veterinary medicine\(^\text{14}\).

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\(^\text{13}\) Ю.В. Чабанова, Забезпечення відповідності державного управління ветеринарною медициною в Україні до умов євроінтеграції, [w:] В.В.Корженко, Н.М.Мельрюхова, Г.С. Одинцова. Тенденції та перспективи європейської інтеграції України: державно-управлінські виміри. Вид-во ХарНУ НАДУ „Магістр” 2007, с. 212–231.

\(^\text{14}\) Ю.В. Чабанова, Організаційно-правові засади....
Since 2001, the veterinary authorities of Ukraine and its territorial organs were responsible for state veterinary and sanitary control and surveillance; coordination and organization of preventive and diagnostic measures against infectious, invasive and non-contagious animal diseases; assessment of epizootic situation and issuing obligatory veterinary directions; safety and quality of food products of animal origin; supervision of manufacture, processing, storage, transportation and sale of products of animal origin; control of using veterinary medical products, biological, chemical and other preparations in veterinary practice and assessment of their impact on animal health and animal product quality; control and coordination of the activities of veterinary specialists employed by state and private enterprises and organizations; control of imported and exported animals, feed stuffs, products and raw materials of animal origin; etc.\(^{15}\)

The conducted study results show that the territorial bodies of the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine performs the functions that fall under the following typological groups: control and supervision (41.6% of all functions); regulative (16.6%); coordinating (11.1%); administrative service delivery (11.1%); political (2.7%); state property management (2.7%). Such functions as standard-setting, human right protection and international cooperation (with the specific weight of 14.2%) are not defined by law\(^{16}\).

Therefore, the national system of veterinary medicine, which was formed in Ukraine historically, was effective, although required upgrading.

Presently in Ukraine the number of administrative measures of supervisory nature is significantly reduced; permit-issuing procedures, non-existent in the EU, are eliminated, and requirements for receiving operational permits are mitigated. Through introduction of a number of government regulations (Ordinances of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No 442 of 10.09.2014, No 667 of 02.09.2015, No 1092 of 12.16.2015) the current system of veterinary institutions of Ukraine is at the stage of reorganization\(^{17}\). Measures to reform the current system of the Ukrainian veterinary services have led to deregulation of the mechanisms of public administration of veterinary medicine. Functions that were carried out by the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine partly go to the State Food and Consumer Service of Ukraine. Implementation of the outlined reorganization measures causes threats to the national security of Ukraine, the most dangerous among them being: loss of state control of the country’s epizootic situation and outbreaks of infectious animal diseases that are dangerous for people; importation of pathogenic agents of animal infectious diseases, dete-

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\(^{15}\) Ю.В. Чабанова, Структурне оформлення..., с. 177–187, 220–226.

\(^{16}\) Ibidem.

rioration of animal and plant product quality and safety in terms of veterinary and sanitary.

**Conclusions of the research**

Thus, the example of the EU member states shows a diversity of organizational structures and subordination of veterinary medicine institutions. It confirms the principle of the EU’s legal tolerance for the structure and activities of veterinary services, which have to pursue shared objectives within the framework of the common market.

The organization (structure) of veterinary services in the EU reflects the administrative organization of every European country, its culture, history and other factors. The area of competence of veterinary services in the countries under research demonstrates a great diversity too.

At the same time, the veterinary services of the EU member states are gradually expanding the range of their activities from the “heart of the profession” (which is animal health) to the veterinary public health, related to ensuring sanitary safety of products.

In the conditions of the European integration policy implementation, problems of legal, structural and functional assurance of executive bodies’ activity are in the center of attention in Ukraine.

Before 2016, in accordance with the tasks of veterinary medicine, the structure of State Veterinary Service in Ukraine consisted of public administration bodies and a network of state establishments (laboratories, clinics, etc.), which was in conformity with administrative and territorial division of Ukraine. Institutions of state veterinary medicine were created at the central and territorial levels (in regions, cities, districts). The State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine performed control, inspective, executive, administrative, representative (including international cooperation) and other functions. The regional offices (territorial organs) of State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of Ukraine located in the country’s regions, cities and districts carried out managerial functions (coordination, organization, control, supervision, etc.), while market surveillance, laboratory research, and certification tests were conducted directly by diagnostic establishments of the district and local levels. Activities of the Ukrainian state veterinary medicine bodies were regulated by laws of Ukraine; decrees of the President of Ukraine, ordinances of the government, other normative documents such as regulations, statutes, instructions, recommendations.

The system of state veterinary medicine formed in Ukraine historically was based on its public epidemiological and veterinary-sanitary control and supervision. Nowadays it undergoes reorganization in the form of structural changes and reduction of basic functions and powers.
In order to join the European Union, the primary goals of public veterinary policy of Ukraine should include protection of the state territory against the entry of pathogenic agents of animal infectious diseases, provision of effective control over the quality and safety of food products coming into the market, and preservation of the existing national system of the State Veterinary Services based on public epidemiological and veterinary-sanitary control and supervision.

Further scientific research should be devoted to studying the structural and functional framework, resource capacity and activities of the veterinary authorities in Ukraine with the aim of bringing them in compliance with the world and the EU requirements is of scientific and practical interest and could be the subject of perspective scientific work.

References


Чабанова Ю.В. Забезпечення відповідності державного управління ветеринарною медициною в Україні до умов євроінтеграції [w:] В.В.Корженко, Н.М.Мельтюхова, Г.С. Одінцова, Тенденції та перспективи європейської інтеграції України: державно-управлінські виміри, Магістр 2007.