

Accreditation for Veterinary Medicine in Mexico up to 2009

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Abstract: The National Council of Veterinary Medicine Education (CONEVET) accredits the quality of education programs of veterinary medicine in Mexico. In this brief study results from the accreditation program for the period 2001-2009. About 16 programs were accredited, two of them were re-accredited and to two pre-accredited were awarded. About 19 national evaluators were trained. About 19 foreign representatives from COPEVET, AVMA and EAEVE were invited as observers. About 5 training courses were created for evaluator education. Consulting was provided for two national and two international accreditation organisms. An alliance was made with Q soft and the program was installed in 8 veterinary schools. CONEVET was awarded as the first accreditation agency in Mexico from COPAES as well as the regional education authorities was carried out with a 90% success. Institutional consulting was provided to three official education devoted agencies.

Key words: Accreditation, veterinary medicine, mexico, CONEVET, COPEVET, COPAES

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation, an international reference: Accreditation is a concept that is accepted by the National Council of Veterinary Education (Consejo Nacional de Educacion de la Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, A. C. CONEVET) (CONEVET, 2003), an evaluation process that contributes to academic enhancement inherent in professional veterinary medicine practice and program planning at institutions. Today, the national educational policy in Mexico is to modernize education with orientation towards improving efficiency in the system and the institutions that comprise them, on the other hand the international political scheme must provide answers for growing economic globalization and pay particular attention to professional human resources that require reinforcement, a guarantee to credibility, acknowledgement and acceptance in professional education programs (CONEVET, 2004; De Jesus Taylor, 2005). Institutional accreditation and specialization represents a mechanism used to orientate educational tasks in professional education using widely accepted national and international practices and results which

becomes an indispensable tool that creates motivation for general improvement in quality (CONEVET, 2004c).

Accreditation has a strategic role that promotes important changes in the organization, homologation and efficiency in college. Upon the signing of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among Mexico, Canada and the United States of America, strong repercussions have affected society and the economy of the three nations (Arellano, 1999). Furthermore, these types of agreements and treaties have been developed with other Latin American countries as well as the European Community and the Pacific basin.

In the scope of colleges has been focussed to drive institutions to cooperate and to explore new ways for international exchange of information in order to educate students and academics based on homologation (De Jesus Taylor, 1998) in the international funds which is authorized based on accreditation (Arellano, 1999). All of this said, accreditation has become a subject of interesting diverse national and international educational establishments as well as to investigators and educational leaders for the past few years (PANVET, 1998; Ramirez and Berruecos, 1995). Accreditation of

institutions, programs and grades with strong civil intervention has become the backbone of education for many of the countries with ample experience regarding this matter. Therefore, voluntary accreditation and a minimum government involvement has become a subject of much interest and analysis (CONEVET, 2005). In the case of Mexico, Veterinary Medicine history is recent but with dynamic evolution, fully supported by all sectors with the creation of CONEVET (Ramirez, 1997), it is clearly an effort made by associations and an obligation to the profession and the country.

On the other hand, an approved Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics profile (Ramirez and Berruecos, 1995; Agronomic Sciences Committee, 1994) and involvement of a high number of schools and faculties would make consistent action between teaching programs and necessary results. At the same time, this would open clear policies within framework for colleges in Mexico.

THE CONEVET ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

CONEVET proposed a work plan through its Accreditation Committee for the establishment of minimum requirements for Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics bachelor's degree accreditation (MVZ) as well as establish mechanisms and begin the process of accreditation (CONEVET, 2003, 2004b). The end product of the work done by the Accreditation Committee (COACRE) was presented at the general assembly on CONEVET December 1st, 1995 in the city of Puebla, Puebla. From then on the instrument has been updated by successive revisions that are carried out at the end of each accreditation (Ramirez, 2000).

A historical landmark for National Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics was the official authorization of CONEVET by the Accreditation Committee for Higher Education (COPAES) on November 30th, 2001 (Ramirez, 2002) constituting at the same time the first organism to accredit higher educational programs in Mexico, recognized by COPAES (Ramirez, 2002).

THE PROCESS TODAY

One of the substantive functions at CONEVET is a bachelor's degree program accreditation for which the COACRE makes up the parity committee that includes the Federation of Veterinary Associations of Mexico, the Mexican Association of Veterinary Medicine Schools (CONEVET, 2004a). One of the first's functions they carried out was to establish a pre-accreditation system (CONEVET, 2004a). Before the program requests a formal

accreditation a pre-diagnosis is carried out based on accreditations indicators this identifies the deficiencies in the program that should be corrected before the formal request is made and gives an external opinion and allows CONEVET to avoid making accreditation process errors which could cause problems in the program for lack of objectivity in its auto-evaluation. In the Accreditation Committee meetings (CONEVET, 2004a), they analyse the results of the evaluations for accreditation but also revise those indicators that based on experience and suggestions of the evaluators and the people being evaluated showed problems (due to lack of coverage, management meaning, affectivity, etc.) in order to provide the Board and the General Assembly with the necessary changes.

It is worth mentioning that the changes that have been made to the indicator show a clear definition and include the observations made by the foreign evaluators.

TYPES OF INDICATORS

The existing 114 indicators have been classified as:

Essentials: Those whose fulfillment is required because it guaranties the quality of the program, 82 of them exist.

Necessary: Those that even if not determinant, influence in the development of the program, 25 of them exist.

Desirables: They consider aspects that can be convenient because they contribute to the functions of the program in a better way, 7 of them exist.

PROGRAM FUNDAMENTS

The bachelor's degree must be supported by an analysis of the current socioeconomic and gremial context (no >5 years old). The analysis must position the program in the regional and national ambits including current indicators of human and animal populations, livestock present and future programs and work market of the veterinarian. It should describe the relations between the course of study of the program with scientific, technologic and humanistic knowledge that they pretend to cover.

Generic study objects: The course of study must include contents that guaranty the formation of the students in each of the fields of work for the MVZ, identifying it with all precision in its curricular map which of its contents are related with the next academic axis:

- Medicine, welfare and animal health
- Livestock's production and economy
- Quality and innocuity of animal byproducts
- Public veterinarian health
- Care of biodiversity and ecosystems

Educative process: The curricular proposal must have the profile of the graduate clearly stated in terms of abilities, knowledge, aptitudes, dexterities and values in congruence with the professional competences that they are expected to carry out in professional practice and with the mission of the program.

Students: The program must have and apply regulations for the ingress, permanency and egress of the students and further regulations for exams and disciplinary sanctions for the students. Mechanisms should exist to guaranty that the students know the norms that rules them.

Professors: The program must have at least one professor for each 10 students ascribed in the program and a full time professor for each 20 students. The program must count with well defined procedures that are sanctioned by college authorities for the ingress, permanence, promotion and stimulus to the academic personnel as well for conformation and operation of college authorities. The evaluation for each of this ends should be made by commissions of academic peers in agreement with the institutional regulation that has to be complied to the letter.

Continuous education: The program must have in its organic structure and area of continuous education that offers each year at least 4 courses of actualization in one area of MVZ.

Investigation: The policy and operative norms of the investigation should be clearly defined these should be sanctioned by a college staff in which research workers and professors must participate.

Infrastructure: The program should have enough classrooms to give all its courses. The program should count with teaching laboratories, amphitheatres, teaching operating room, necropsy room and bench work for animal by-products.

Clinic and zootechnic resources: The program must have a hospital or clinic of its own to teach the medicine of small animal and another one for large animals. The program must have a zootechnic centre in good working

conditions and with the animal species required to cover the course of study to give class to do research and have as well sales production otherwise have instead contracts signed for the fulfillment of the practice required by the regular bachelors courses.

Finances: The program must have a defined budget and have policies defined for the application of the resources.

Linking and community services: There should be official instances in charge of management and follow up projects and/or convenes of collaboration with institutions and companies related to the area. It must supervise the opportune making of all the programmed actions in every convene.

Foreign evaluators: An important point regarding accreditation has been the incorporation of expert foreign evaluators as part of the invited group of guests (Ramirez and Berruecos, 1995). Members if the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Pan-American Council of Education in Veterinary Sciences (PANVET) have visited us on Behalf of the Pan-American Veterinary Educational Committee (COPEVET) and the European Union of Veterinary Education Committee (EAEVE). The qualifications given by them help us on one hand as a mechanism to evaluate the system and on the other to see how they carry put accreditation, the important points according to their criteria and their suggestions that help to improve the processes. The foreign observers have been a great help and have provided us with an extraordinary amount of feedback that should be considered in the near future (CONEVET, 2004b).

ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

Current CONEVET accredited programs up to 2009 are shown in Table 1 (Ramirez, 2010). With a total of 16 accredited programs, it means that approximately 30% of

Table 1: Types of indicators distribution

Types of indicator	Essentials	Necessary	Desirables	Total
Program fundaments	5	0	0	5
Generic study objects	5	0	0	5
Program organization	4	0	0	4
Educative process	15	3	0	18
Students	10	2	3	15
Professors	11	7	1	19
Continuous education	2	2	0	4
Investigation	8	2	1	11
Infrastructure	9	3	1	13
Clinic and zootechnic resources	3	0	0	3
Finances	4	2	0	6
Linking and community services	6	4	1	11
Total	82	25	7	114

the 52 existing MVZ (Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics) programs in Mexico are involved in improving quality (Arellano, 1999).

Training courses for evaluators: An essential part of the accreditation process is training evaluators. So far, CONEVET had created five training-workshops with the collaboration of the Agriculture Sciences Committee at CIEES (CCA) (CONEVET, 2004c) and the Mexican Accreditation Committee of Agronomy Education Association (COMEEA) at the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, the University of Mexico State, the University of Zacatecas, University of Veracruz and University of Guadalajara among others (Ramirez, 2010).

Consulting and quality maintenance: The Accreditation Committee has provided consulting to other accreditation organism in similar areas of expertise, such as the Mexican Accreditation Committee of Agriculture Education Association (COMEEA) and the National Association of Oceanography Professionals (ANPROMAR). The relationship with these organisms should be maintained and nurtured. An agreement was established to collaborate with COMEEA where evaluators from CONEVET participate in the accreditation of Agricultural Engineering programs. Consulting was also provided for Colombia's CNA (National Council for Accreditation) and Chile's CNAP (National Commission for Accreditation) (Taylor, 1998). In order in order to maintain quality in the pre-accredited, accredited and re-accredited programs, an alliance was established with the company Q-Soft of Mexico for the installation of software at the veterinary schools that allows documentation and follow-up when complying with recommendations found in the various evaluation stages that is to say before during and after pre-accreditation, accreditation, post-accreditation and re-accreditation processes (Ramirez, 2010).

EDITORIAL PROGRAM

CONEVET managerial team revised the accreditation indicator and created the Accreditation Manual (valid up to date) and participated in the design of Accreditation regulation also, the book Perspectives of Veterinary Evaluation in Mexico in the first decades of the 20th century was edited in the mentioned period (Ramirez, 2010)(Table 2). During the period 2001-2006, the following articles were published:

- CONEVET primer organismo de acreditacion reconocido por el COPAES (CONEVET first accreditation organism recognized by the COPAES). Paedagogium 3 (13): 22-23. Mexico (Ramirez and Barruecos, 2002)
- Un hito historico el reconocimiento oficial del CONEVET (A historical milestone, the official recognition of the CONEVET). Nuestro Acontecer Porcino 10 (54): 46-48. Mexico (Ramirez, 2002)
- La acreditacion de los programas academicos de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia (The accreditation of Medical Veterinary and Zootechnical academic programs). MVZ Gaceta p. 8. Mexico (Ramirez, 2003a)
- La acreditacion de los programas academicos de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia en Mexico. (The accreditation of Medical Veterinary and Zootechnical academic programs in Mexico). Reunion Mundial de Lideres en la Educacion Veterinaria. FMVZ UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics), Mexico (Ramirez, 2003b)
- La seguridad industrial y la bioseguridad en las escuelas y FMVZ (Industrial security and biosecurity in schools and FMVZ). Nuestro Acontecer Porcino. 12 (64): 34-35. Mexico

Table 2: Conevet accredited programs from different mexican institutions

Institution	Expiration date
Instituto de Investigacion en Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad Autonoma de Baja California	Sep 01, 2010
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Juarez del Estado de Durango	Sep 01, 2010
Centro Universitario del Sur, Universidad de Guadalajara	Jan 30, 2011
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Veracruzana	Jan 30, 2011
División Regional de Ciencia Animal, Universidad Autonoma Agraria Antonio Narro	Aug 28, 2011
Departamento de Ciencias Agricolas y Veterinarias, Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora	Nov 29, 2011
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan	Sep 03, 2012
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo	Sep 03, 2012
Centro de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes	Nov 22, 2012
Centro Universitario de Ciencias Biologicas y Agropecuarias, Universidad de Guadalajara	Apr 18, 2013
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Mexico	Jan 15, 2014
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico	Jun 14, 2014
Instituto de Ciencias Biomedicas, Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez	Nov 27, 2014
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon	Nov 27, 2014
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas	Nov 27, 2014
Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas	Nov 27, 2014

- CONEVET has received the following awards: By COPAES in November, 2001 (Ramirez, 2002) in Mexico city and by COPEVET in March, 2004 in the city of Salvador de Bahia, Brazil

CONCLUSION

The study shows that CONEVET actions for the 2001-2009 period were: The 16 MVZ programs accredited. About >100 national evaluators were trained. About >20 foreign representatives (from 8 different countries) from COPEVET, AVMA and EAEVE were invited as observers. Ten training courses were created for evaluator education. Consulting was provided for two national and two international accreditation organisms. An alliance was made with Q-Soft so far this program has been installed in 8 veterinary schools.

One book, an accreditation manual and the COACRE (CONEVET's Accreditation Committee) regulations were edited. About >5 lay studys were published. The 1st researcher of this study participated in 7 national conferences and in 5 international events. CONEVET was awarded as the first accreditation agency in Mexico from COPAES (Nov, 2001), as well as the first accreditation agency in Latin America from COPEVET (Council for High Education Accreditation) (March, 2004). Lobbying with 10 regional education authorities was carried out with a 90% success rate. Institutional consulting was provided to three Ministries.

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