CONTINUING VETERINARY EDUCATION NEEDS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, EXTENSION AND PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT TO THE VETERINARY SURGEONS OF KERALA STATE

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ABSTRACT

In fact, the importance of information technology, extension and professional management to the career of a veterinary surgeon is very much obvious today in view of the new economic policies and Panchayati Raj. Such is the case, continuing veterinary education (CVE) programmes in these subject matter areas must be emphasized and organized. A study was conducted among the veterinary surgeons of Kerala with the objective of identifying their CVE needs regarding information technology, extension and professional management. The study revealed that Knowledge cum skill of using computer in office, modern extension teaching methods and service rules and regulations need great emphasis in the CVE programmes. Further, under IT, basics of computer, word processing, creation of graphs, spread sheets, database creation, its uses and maintenance were the priority areas of training. Resource persons from outside the organization shall preferably be the trainers. An institutional training for IT and distance learning for extension and professional management shall preferably be the modes of training. For a short term training institutes within the state other than agricultural university was emphasized whereas for a long term training in the subjects of extension and professional management premier institutes outside the state was emphasized.

Key word : Continuing Veterinary Education Professional Management Distance Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Veterinary surgeons of the animal husbandry department (AHD) of Kerala, as elsewhere, play a crucial role in the development of the livestock sector. To be efficient and effective, they need to be proficient in information technology (IT), extension and professional management besides clinical and production aspects. In fact, the importance of information technology, extension and professional management to the career of a veterinary surgeon is very much obvious today in view of the new economic policies and Panchayati Raj. Such is the case, continuing veterinary education (CVE) programmes in these subject matter areas must be emphasized and organized. However, such C.V.E. programmes can be realistic only if the curriculum is based on the needs of learners. In view of the above facts, a study was conducted among the veterinary surgeons of Kerala with the objective of identifying their CVE needs regarding information technology, extension and professional management.

METHODOLOGY

A purposive sampling procedure was adopted for this study. Questionnaires were either sent by post or distributed in person during district level conferences to all the 764 veterinary surgeons of the state animal husbandry department (AHD). One hundred and thirty veterinary surgeons returned the filled in questionnaires within the stipulated period of time and hence they constituted the sample. In order to ascertain educational needs, subject matter areas under information technology, extension and professional management were identified with the help of experts. The respondents were asked to indicate the requirements in a three point continuum viz., required, somewhat required and not required with corresponding weightages of 3, 2 and 1, respectively and separately for knowledge and skill. Later these scores were added to get a common score for knowledge cum skill based training. The scores of all the respondents for each subject matter area were added. This total score was divided by 130, the number of respondents. Based on the mean score values all the subject matter areas were ranked.

$$\text{Mean score (MS) of a subject matter area} = \frac{\text{Total score}}{\text{Number of respondents}}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data in table 1 indicate that under IT, the need for knowledge and skill in using computer in office was the most felt (MS 5.26) followed in the descending rank order by basics of computer, word processing, creation of graphs and spread sheets (MS 5.25), data base creation its uses and maintenance (MS 5.16), internet and its uses (MS 5.07) and Websites: its creation and utilization (MS 4.97).

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Table 1. Subject matter areas preferred for inclusion in the C.V.E. programme

S. No.	Mean Subject matter area	Rank score	Overall within the domain	rank
I.	**Information Technology**			
1.	Using Computer in office	5.26	I	I
2.	Basics of computer, word processing, Creation of graphs, spread sheets	5.25	II	II
3.	Database creation: its uses and maintenance	5.16	III	III
4.	Internet and its uses	5.07	IV	V
5.	Websites: its creation and utilization	4.97	V	VIII
II.	**Extension**			
1.	Modern extension teaching methods	5.09	I	IV
2.	Advanced training methods and HRD	5.06	II	VI
3.	Project formulation, implementation and evaluation	5.02	III	VII
4.	Mass media communication and journalism	4.95	IV	IX
5.	Organising seminars, symposia and exhibition	4.81	V	XI
6.	Entrepreneurship/leadership development among livestock owners	4.76	VI	XII
7.	Participatory rural appraisal techniques	4.75	VII	XII
III.	**Professional management**			
1.	Service rules and regulations	4.9	I	X
2.	Office administration and supervision	4.68	II	XIV
3.	Record keeping	4.60	III	XV
4.	Personnel management	4.56	IV	XVI

Under extension, the need for knowledge and skill in modern extension teaching methods was the most felt (MS 5.09) followed, in the descending rank order by advanced training methods and human resource development (MS 5.06), project formulation, implementation and evaluation (MS 5.02), mass media communication and journalism (MS 4.95), organizing seminars, symposia, exhibition etc. (MS 4.81), entrepreneurship and leadership development (MS 4.76) and participatory rural appraisal techniques (MS 4.75). The need for training in the above subject matter areas has also been reported by Krishnaraj (1975).

Under professional management, the need for knowledge and skill in service rules and regulations (MS 4.9) was the most felt followed in the descending rank order by office administration and supervision (MS 4.68), record keeping (MS 4.60) and personnel management (MS 4.56). Similar findings with respect to agricultural extension officers have also been reported by Sandhu and Bilang (1977).

Overall ranking indicated that need for knowledge and skill in using computer in offices, basics of computer, word processing, creation of graphs, spread sheets etc. and database creation and its uses all pertaining to

IT were ranked first, second and third, respectively. This pointed out the significance of CVE programmes on information technology. Respondents have rightly conceived the relevance of information technology to their career. Nevertheless, in the cases of extension and professional management imparting knowledge and skill in modern extension teaching methods and service rules and regulations respectively require top priority.

Table 2. Preference for mode of CVE programme

S. No.	Subject matter areas	Distance learning		Institutional (Face-to-face)		Integrated	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Information technology	35	26.92	55	42.31	40	30.77
2	Extension	69	53.08	26	20.00	35	26.92
3	Professional management	52	40	44	33.85	34	26.15

Data in table 2 indicated the mode of training preferred by the respondents. For information technology, majority (42.31%) preferred an institutional training. Those who preferred a distance-learning mode were 26.92 per cent. However, 30.77 per cent of the respondents preferred an integration of both distance learning and institutional mode. For extension, majority (53.08%) preferred distance learning mode followed by integrated mode (26.92%) and institutional mode (20%). For professional management, majority (40%) preferred distance-learning mode followed by institutional (33.85%) and integrated (26.15%) mode.

In view of the above facts, an institutional mode of CVE programme in IT, and a distance-learning mode both in extension and professional management may be emphasized.

Table 3. Preference for venue of CVE programme

S. No.	Subject matter areas	Institutes of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU)		Institutes within Kerala other than KAU		Premier institutes outside Kerala	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
A.	**Short -term training**						
1.	Information technology	23	17.69	84	64.61	23	17.69
2	Extension	29	22.31	67	51.57	24	26.15
3	Professional management	20	15.38	77	59.23	33	25.38
B.	**Long -term training**						
1	Information technology	13	10	60	46.15	57	43.85
2	Extension	24	18.46	33	25.39	73	56.15
3	Professional management	14	10.77	53	40.77	63	48.46

Data in table 3 indicate the preferred venues of institutional CVE programme. For a short-term training on IT, majority (64.61%) preferred institutes within the state other than the agricultural university. However, 17.69 per cent each of respondents preferred either the

institutes of agricultural university or premier institutes outside the state. For a long-term training on IT, majority (46.15%) also preferred institutes within the state other than agricultural university. For a short term training on extension, the majority (51.54%) preferred institutes within the state other than agricultural university followed by premier institute outside the state (26.15%) and institutes of agricultural university (22.31%). However, for a long term training on extension, majority (56.15%) preferred premier institutes outside the state.

For a short-term training on professional management, majority (59.23%) preferred institutes within the state other than agricultural university followed by premier institute outside the state (25.38%) and institutes of agricultural university (15.38%). However, for a long-term training on professional management, majority (48.46%) preferred premier institutes outside the state.

The above data indicate that the venue of institutional CVE programme on IT shall preferably be institutes within the state other than agricultural university for both short term and long-term training.

Table 4. Preference for resource persons

Sl. No.	Subject matter areas	Resource persons from the organization (AHD)		Resource persons from outside the organization		Resource persons from outside the state	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Information technology	15	11.54	58	44.62	57	43.85
2	Extension	46	35.38	69	53.08	15	11.54
3	Professional management	34	26.15	50	38.46	46	35.38

Data in table 4 show that as far the preference for resource persons for C.V.E. programmes on IT, majority respondents (44.62%) preferred those from outside the organization closely followed by those from outside the state (43.85%) and lastly from within the organization (11.54%). For extension, the preference of a majority (53.08%) was the resource persons from outside the organization followed by those from within the organization (35.38%) and lastly from outside the state (11.54%). As far professional management, the choice of a majority (38.46%) was the resource persons from outside the organization followed by those from outside the state (35.38%) and lastly those from within the organization (26.15%).

In general, it can be stated that for IT, extension and professional management, the resource persons shall be preferably from outside the organization.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge cum skill of using computer in office, modern extension teaching methods and service rules and regulations need great emphasis in the CVE programmes. Further, under IT, basics of computer, word processing, creation of graphs, spread sheets, database creation, its uses and maintenance were the priority areas of training. Resource persons from outside the organization shall preferably be the trainers. An institutional training for IT and distance learning for extension and professional management shall preferably be the modes of training. For a short term training institutes within the state other than agricultural university was emphasized whereas for a long term training in the subjects of extension and professional management premier institutes outside the state was emphasized.

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