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Editorial

Beyond the Awaited Vet: Bridging Nigeria's Animal Healthcare Gap

Dr. Salami Kaseem Dele |

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Salami Kaseem Dele, Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria. [ORCID: 0000-0003-3106-7745].

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The allocation of budget for veterinary care has been a pressing concern, with experts welcoming the emphasis on adding 20,000 veterinary professionals and scaling breeding facilities. However, there's a pressing need to address animal nutrition, as gaps in this area can undermine health and breeding efforts. According to experts, India's daily milk production stands at 3-5 liters, significantly lower than the global average of 7-8 liters, highlighting the need for improved animal nutrition and health. The budget's focus on increasing veterinary professionals and expanding breeding facilities is a positive step, but addressing animal nutrition is crucial to achieving desired results. The impact of budget allocations on animal health and nutrition is multifaceted. With the rising cost of living, managing pet budgets has become a priority, and prevention is key to reducing veterinary bills in the long term. Investing in high-quality animal nutrition can prevent many digestive and kidney problems, while using natural care and animal naturopathy can reduce consultation frequency. Pet health insurance is also becoming increasingly important, with many plans offering preventive packages. To address these issues, governments and stakeholders must prioritize animal nutrition and work towards creating a comprehensive food system that integrates agriculture, animal husbandry, and veterinary sciences. By doing so, we can ensure the health and well-being of animals, promote sustainable agriculture, and support rural economic growth.

The shortage of veterinary professionals, particularly in rural areas, is a pressing concern that affects access to care for animals and has significant implications for animal welfare, public health, and the agricultural economy. The American Veterinary Service is facing challenges such as workforce shortages, rising client expectations, and increasing costs, which can be overwhelming for pet owners and farmers alike. In Nigeria, the situation is no different, with many rural areas lacking access to veterinary care, leading to delayed treatment and increased risk of disease transmission. However, there are efforts underway to address this issue. For instance, the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) in the US has been successful in attracting veterinarians to rural areas, and similar initiatives could be explored in Nigeria.

The industry is also seeing trends like increased adoption of digital tools, AI, and hybrid care models, which aim to improve efficiency and client experience. These innovations have the potential to revolutionize veterinary care, making it more accessible and affordable for pet owners and farmers. For example, telemedicine platforms can connect veterinarians with clients in remote areas, reducing the need for travel and increasing access to care. Address the shortage of veterinary professionals, it's essential to invest in education and training programs that attract and retain veterinarians in rural areas. This could include scholarships, loan repayment programs, and professional development opportunities. Additionally, promoting digital literacy and access to technology can help bridge the gap in veterinary care. Ultimately, addressing the shortage of veterinary professionals requires a multifaceted approach that involves government agencies, private sector organizations, and educational institutions working together to prioritize animal health and welfare.