Understanding veterinary quackery in Uganda

**Opinion**

Uganda is a small country located in the East African region whose economic backbone is agriculture. In Uganda it takes three years and five years to graduate a para-vet and veterinarian, respectively. Upon qualification one is required by law to register with the Uganda Veterinary Board (UVB) which maintains a register of all qualified vets in Uganda. One of the challenges faced by the animal population is the scarcity of veterinary health workers in different areas which has resulted into emergence of unqualified veterinary officers. Veterinary Quackery is defined as “Practice by unqualified individual as required by law to offer veterinary services in form of animal treatment, distribution of restricted animal drugs and impersonation as a veterinarian.”  This is a problem many clients (farm and companion animal owners) face in Uganda today. Unfortunately, because of the gap that has been created due to scarcity of qualified veterinary officers to animal owners in different areas of the country, this has given a golden opportunity to the proliferation of veterinary quacks who appeal to such growing demand of veterinary services. Quackery as a practice appeals to the emotions of animal owners and thus the professional bodies giving a deaf ear may be empowering them something already happening in Uganda and Africa as a whole.

Today, modern health quacks have invested time and energy to develop such dishonest practices and claims to have special quacks. Quackery is the scarcity of veterinary health workers in different areas which has costed many farmers and animal owners. They have indeed violated the “golden rule” of “do for others what you want done for you” and thus becoming a barrier to proper animal health and increase in income to livestock producer. One way animal owners have been advised as able to identify a qualified veterinarian for their animals is the demand for the professional identity cards of anyone attending to their animals and watch out for individuals who claim to have quick fix to their problems because that’s not part of our ethical conduct as veterinarians.

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**References**