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## At the Crossroads of Tradition and Empire: Kazakh Veterinary Feldshers in the Service of the Steppe Region (19th – early 20th centuries)

Tenlik T. Dalayeva<sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Republic of Kazakhstan

### Abstract

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the place and role of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers* within the sociocultural space of the Steppe Region during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The study focuses on their unique position at the intersection of traditional Kazakh knowledge of animal husbandry and imperial Russian veterinary medicine. The relevance of the topic lies in the need to examine this professional group as a “bridge between cultures”, functioning both as an instrument of the colonial administration and as bearers of local identity.

Special attention is paid to the reconstruction of the official activities and biographical details of individual veterinary *feldshers* who managed to secure a certain position within the local service system. The study is based on documents from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Historical Archive of Omsk Oblast, as well as memoirs of descendants and local history materials.

As a result of archival research, it was possible to establish that the total number of Kazakhs who were students and graduates of the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) and the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917) amounted to 64 individuals. The key conclusion is that the activities of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers*, who had received imperial education, were oriented toward the implementation of colonial administrative functions. In particular, they effectively acted as intermediaries in the enforcement of measures aimed at transforming traditional Kazakh pastoralism, including the introduction of quarantine regulations, vaccination campaigns, and restrictions on nomadic mobility. Essentially, an analysis of historical sources and studies demonstrates that, as a result of the development of capitalist relations in the Steppe region, livestock acquired the character of a commodity. Furthermore, the restriction of nomadic territories and the spread of new livestock-breeding practices among Kazakhs by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – such as stall-feeding and haymaking – led to the decline of traditional pastoralism. This process, in turn, contributed to a decrease in the social status of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers*, who, despite their formal education, were unable to exert significant social influence within Kazakh society.

**Keywords:** Kazakh veterinary feldshers, traditions, the Steppe region, veterinary education, pastoralism, colonial policy, the Russian Empire, 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### 1. Introduction

The modernization processes in the Kazakh Steppe during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries constituted a complex set of socio-economic and cultural transformations initiated by the Russian Empire. In this context, the expansion of professional education served as a key instrument for introducing imperial practices into the steppe space and for the gradual adaptation of Kazakh nomadic economy to colonial reform conditions shaped by capitalist relations. In particular, the veterinary sector within the Russian Empire was primarily concerned with organizing supervision and combating the spread of epizootic diseases. Given the vast territory of the Steppe region and its underdeveloped infrastructure, the imperial veterinary service

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [t.dalayeva@abaiuniversity.edu.kz](mailto:t.dalayeva@abaiuniversity.edu.kz) (T.T. Dalayeva)

required regional personnel, including both Cossack and Kazakh *feldshers*, who were tasked with exercising official duties within their respective territorial jurisdictions.

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the place and role of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers* in the sociocultural space of the Steppe Region in the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, at the intersection of traditional pastoral knowledge and imperial veterinary medicine.

To achieve this aim, the article addresses the following questions: How did the process of training professional veterinary *feldsher* personnel from among Kazakhs for the Steppe Region take place at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School? How were Kazakh veterinary feldshers perceived within nomadic Kazakh society – as “insiders” and bearers of traditional knowledge or as “agents of imperial authority” – and how did these perceptions shape their practical activities? How did the intersection of traditional Kazakh pastoral knowledge and imperial Russian veterinary medicine affect the professional status, practice, and effectiveness of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers* in service in the Steppe Region from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries? The article presents a socio-historical portrait of Kazakh veterinary *feldshers* based on a reconstruction of available biographical data and information on their training in Omsk, as well as on their service activities within the territory of the West Siberian Governor-Generalship (1822–1882) and subsequently the Steppe Region (1882–1917).

## 2. Materials and methods

The source base of this article is grounded in documents and materials from the following archival collections: the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (TsGA RK, Almaty, Kazakhstan), including F. 64 (Office of the Steppe Governor-General, Omsk, 1868–1918) F. 369 (Akmolinsk Regional Administration, Omsk, 1862–1920); and the State Historical Archive of the Omsk Region (IAOO, Omsk, Russian Federation), including F. 3 (Main Administration of Western Siberia in Omsk, 1805–1905). These materials include documents relating to the discussion of the 1880 project on Kazakh veterinary *feldshers*; the draft Statute of the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School of 1906; reports on the condition and operation of the school; petitions for admission; documents concerning the dispatch of Kazakh boys from the regions to study in Omsk; records on the establishment of scholarships for Kazakhs; materials on the remuneration of volost veterinary feldshers; petitions for leave; documents on appointments, postings, and transfers; as well as records on the organization of veterinary supervision and the state of veterinary services in the Steppe Region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Among published sources, in addition to narrative accounts by Russian officials who served in the veterinary sphere and regional (local history) studies, particular interest is attached to materials from provincial surveys, which contain the views of the military governors of the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts on the organization of veterinary services within their respective jurisdictions.

The study of the history of Kazakh education at the Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) and the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917) requires the application of contemporary methodological approaches that focus on the production of colonial knowledge and on the role of secular educational institutions in the relationship between imperial power and the Kazakh population. Engagement with the approach of “agriculture as a contested field of knowledge” (Agriculture as Knowledge/ Agrarian Pedagogy as a Site of Contestation), employed by Preeti (Preeti, 2022) in the case of Bihar (India), makes it possible to trace how imperial authority sought, in part, to discredit time-tested local practices and to replace them with alternative technologies. In the Kazakh Steppe, this process became inevitable under conditions of crisis in nomadic pastoralism caused by the reduction of pasture lands and changes in herd composition among the Kazakhs.

The study also makes extensive use of the historical-comparative method in examining the composition of Kazakh students at the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) and at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917), as well as in comparing their subsequent professional trajectories. The prosopographical method is likewise applicable to the collected materials, enabling an analytical approach to the sources with attention to social, territorial, and other characteristics. In addition, the reconstruction of biographical data on Kazakh students and graduates of the veterinary feldsher schools in Omsk is based on the application of a microhistorical approach to the analysis of the identified documents.

## 3. Discussion

The historiography of veterinary services in Kazakhstan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as studies of the process of training professional feldsher personnel from among Kazakhs, is represented in the works of both modern and contemporary scholars. As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, surveys of veterinary affairs were published by E. Ostrovsky (Ostrovsky, 2001), A.I. Dobrosmyslov (Dobrosmyslov, 1897), and V. Mikhailov (Mikhailov, 1893). These works provide insight into the organization of veterinary supervision in the territory of the Bukey Horde and the Turgai Region from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as in the Akmolinsk Oblast in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are significant as narrative sources characterizing the subject under study from the perspective of official imperial authority, represented by the Russian Empire.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the history of the organization of veterinary services in the territory of Kazakhstan was addressed in the dissertation by S.K. Kozhakin (Kozhakin, 1949). The development of the veterinary system in Siberia is examined in the study by A.N. Sikorsky (Sikorsky, 1964), who dates the emergence of veterinary practice in the region to 1810. On the history of veterinary education in Siberia, he also published the book *“On the History of Veterinary Education in Siberia”* (Sikorsky, 1970), which includes, in particular, information on the Tobolsk Veterinary Feldsher School. The history of the organization of veterinary feldsher training in Omsk itself is discussed in the article by N.S. Zhukova (Zhukova, 2012), which is based on historical documents from the State Historical Archive of the Omsk Oblast (IAOO).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, research in Kazakhstan has addressed not only the history of the dissemination of imperial veterinary practices in the modern period but also the professional activities of Kazakhs serving as veterinary feldshers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In particular, in the monograph by Professor G.S. Sultangalieva, *“Western Kazakhstan in the System of Ethnocultural Contacts (18<sup>th</sup> – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)”* (Sultangalieva, 2002), information on Kazakhs who studied at secondary and higher educational institutions in Orenburg and Kazan is systematized; this includes data on 19 graduates of the Kazan Veterinary Institute who subsequently served as veterinarians in the Ural and Turgai regions and in the Inner Horde. The materials presented make it possible to characterize the state of veterinary services in the territory of Western Kazakhstan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This topic was examined in the dissertation of A.A. Aitmukhambetov, who analyzed some cases of Kazakh veterinary feldshers in comparison with other professional groups of Kazakh local level employees (teachers, physicians, and medical feldshers) (Aitmukhambetov, 2010). The life trajectories of individual 19<sup>th</sup>-century veterinary feldshers who participated in the Alash movement and were subsequently subjected to repression are currently being reconstructed. Information about them is being compiled on the basis of archival documents and descendants' recollections. One such figure – the volost veterinary feldsher of Akmolinsk Oblast, Amre Isin – was discussed by Z.E. Kabuldinov (Kabuldinov, 2017). Of particular interest are the local history studies of Yu.G. Popov, which contain information on Beisebai Toksarın and Abubakır Kurmanov, feldshers of the veterinary service at the Koyandy Fair in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Popov, 2011: 29-32). The peculiarities of Kazakh horse breeding as described by researchers of the Russian Empire are discussed in the article by A.U. Toktabay and A.S. Nugumanova (Toktabay, Nugumanova, 2022). The nature of imperial veterinary practices and their impact on Kazakh pastoralism is examined in the studies by A.I. Duisebayeva (Duisebayeva, 2022; Duisebayeva, 2023).

It is evident that the majority of studies have focused either on the institutional history of veterinary medicine in the territory of Kazakhstan (including the activities of Cossack structures) or on analyses of imperial policy more broadly, treating veterinary supervision as a function of the colonial administration in the context of the development of capitalist relations. As a result, the agent-centered (subjective) dimension of modernization has remained largely in the background. Despite the significance of the professional veterinary school in Omsk for the transformation of the veterinary sphere in the Steppe Region, there has been virtually no systematic study of the training of Kazakh veterinary feldshers in Omsk. The total number of students and graduates of the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) and the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917) has not been established, nor have their personal motivations and aims in pursuing veterinary education or their role in the modernization of traditional Kazakh society at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries been sufficiently examined. The present study seeks to fill this gap.

#### 4. Results

The training of veterinary personnel in Western Siberia was initially linked to the need to service the Siberian Cossack Host. The Siberian Cossack Host belonged to the category of irregular troops of the Russian Empire and, in essence, functioned as a cavalry force. Since the primary function of Cossack troops was mounted service, the training of veterinary feldshers was a practical necessity. As early as 1873, the Military Ministry developed regulations on Cossack feldshers, which were put into effect on 1 January 1874 by the Economic Administration of the Siberian Cossack Host. On 6 November 1874, the *Rules for the Training of Veterinary Feldshers for the Siberian Cossack Host* were approved. According to these rules, in order to ‘staff the Siberian Cossack Host with veterinary feldshers, a course for the training of Cossacks and minors was established at the veterinary infirmary opened at the Host training sotnia’. ‘The number of trainees in veterinary feldsher training was set at nine persons, that is, one for each of the nine cavalry regiments that the Siberian Cossack Host was required to field in wartime’ (Zhukova, 2012: 374). ‘In addition to the Regulations on Cossack feldshers, an *Instruction for the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host* was developed and approved on 28 August 1879’ (Zhukova, 2012: 376). In the same year, 1879, the Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host was opened in Omsk.

The introduction of effective veterinary control in the Steppe Region, whose administrative center was located in Omsk, was one of the key tasks of the imperial authorities, since livestock husbandry predominated in this area, forming the basis of regional prosperity and constituting an important source of fiscal revenues. The subsistence of the Kazakh population depended almost entirely on pastoralism. Kazakh animal husbandry was based on purely empirical practice that was cyclically refined over time, generating

knowledge of epizootic and etiological factors, as well as the diagnosis and prognosis of diseases. To a certain extent, all Kazakh pastoralists possessed such knowledge and were able to provide assistance to their animals. “Healers engaged in the treatment of livestock in Kazakh society were divided, depending on the methods they employed, into *otashy* (surgeons), *synykshy* (bone-setters), and *emsek* (healers). ... the common people relied on their knowledge in treating certain widespread animal diseases, naturally excluding severe cases” (Argynbayev, 2024: 217). Among the Kazakhs there existed a system of preventive measures based on knowledge shared by the entire community. In this context, the recruitment and employment of members of the local Kazakh population in the positions of volost veterinary feldshers appeared to be an effective means of ensuring control over such vast territories in the interests of the imperial authorities. However, the underlying purpose of organizing the veterinary service lay in the establishment of sanitary control.

The training of Kazakh veterinary feldshers at the Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host became a specific measure for introducing veterinary and sanitary administration in the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk regions. ‘On 4 April 1880, under No. 451, the Governor-General of Western Siberia, N.G. Kaznakov, approved a resolution of the Council of the Main Administration of Western Siberia on the establishment in the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts of supernumerary medical and veterinary feldsher posts, to be filled by scholarship holders from Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) communities, as well as on the provision of medical kits’. By the late 1870s, the issue of introducing supernumerary positions for Kazakh volost medical and veterinary feldshers had become pressing, since under the *Temporary Regulation on Administration in the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk Regions* of 1868 and the staffing tables appended to it, only one district physician and one midwife were appointed, while no veterinary physicians or veterinary and medical feldshers were allocated to districts according to the official staffing norms (Masevich, 1960: 327). For this reason, it was proposed to classify Kazakh volost veterinary feldshers as supernumerary positions, with their maintenance financed from levies collected from Kazakh nomadic volosts.

In a memorandum dated 21 February 1880 addressed to the Governor-General of Western Siberia, N.G. Kaznakov, the Military Governor of the Akmolinsk Oblast, Major General V.S. Tsytovich, set out his reflections on the draft regulations concerning Kazakh veterinary feldshers: “Before considering the draft regulations on veterinary feldshers, I deem it necessary to discuss the role these feldshers would play in the steppe. The most terrible enemy of Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) horses and livestock is winter ice crust (*goleleditsa*), as a result of which livestock perish in enormous numbers from starvation. Against this scourge all veterinary measures are powerless. Contagious diseases appear rarely in the steppe, and the Kirgiz (Kazakhs – T.D.) possess reliable means to prevent the spread of infection: they slaughter diseased animals for consumption and drive the remaining livestock to another location, whereby the infection immediately ceases. Here, too, veterinary assistance is of no use. What remains are ordinary diseases, in which veterinary assistance could be beneficial, provided it were readily available and, moreover, free of charge. Dispatching a feldsher over distances of several hundred miles away for the treatment of ordinary diseases is hardly feasible. Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) livestock is of such low value that its cost would scarcely cover the expenses of such a mission. Moreover, under such circumstances, before the feldsher arrives, the animal will either recover or perish. It is impossible to have one feldsher for every 100-200 kubitkas, nor would the Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) be able to maintain such a number of feldshers” (IAOO. F. 3. Op. 9. D. 15948. L. 15-16ob.). Accordingly, the Military Governor of Akmolinsk proposed the following: “... I would consider it advisable to retain veterinary feldshers graduating from the school for their first year under the supervision of district physicians, to grant them no more than 120 rubles per year in maintenance, and to allow them to treat Cossack livestock, as well as Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) livestock when it is located in the vicinity of the District Administration. At the same time, they could be permitted to charge a small fee for the treatment of animals. In the event of the appearance of epidemic diseases in the steppe, they could be dispatched to suppress the epidemic and provide assistance to the affected livestock. After the lapse of a year, when a new cohort of feldshers arrives to the District physician, the previous ones could be sent into the steppe” (IAOO. F. 3. Op. 9. D. 15948. L. 17).

Gradually, a clear understanding emerged of the functions that volost feldshers were expected to perform, and the practical necessity of their work became increasingly evident. Following the establishment of the Steppe Governor-Generalship in 1882, Governor-General G.A. Kolpakovsky approved, in March 1884, the *Rules for Kazakh Medical and Veterinary Feldshers*. Article 9 of these Rules defined the duties of veterinary feldshers as follows: “(a) to provide veterinary assistance to sick domestic animals; (b) in the event of the appearance of an epizootic, to report it to the district head and the district physician; (c) to carry out the instructions of the district physician and the veterinary physician in matters of veterinary treatment during outbreaks of mass livestock diseases” (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2918. L. 25–26ob.). It is evident that particular attention was paid to issues of control and the prevention of the spread of epizootics in the steppe. In the early 1880s, Kazakh volost veterinary feldshers, like Kazakh volost medical feldshers, were subordinate to the district physician, due to the absence of veterinary physicians in the official staffing tables of the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts (regions). Article 10 of the Rules stated: “Medical and veterinary feldshers, as persons familiar with the customs, beliefs, superstitions, and prejudices of the Kirgiz (Kazakhs – T.D.), must engage in the collection of information on local medicinal remedies used by the Kirgiz (Kazakhs –

T.D.) and submit this information to the district physician for the purpose of determining the usefulness or harmfulness of such remedies” (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2918. L. 26–26ob.).

Veterinary physicians were primarily engaged in organizing veterinary-police measures aimed at preventing the spread of various epizootics across the steppe. Thus, A.I. Dobrosmyslov, who held the position of veterinary physician in the Turgai Region from 1868 to 1901, wrote: “Until the end of 1888, no veterinary-police measures whatsoever were undertaken against it (the plague), apart from official reports by the district administration to the regional authorities and the occasional visits by the four veterinary physicians available in the region to infected localities in order to determine the nature of the disease” (Dobrosmyslov, 1895: 207). This situation underscored the need to recruit Kazakhs to serve in the positions of volost veterinary feldshers.

The first cohort of four Kazakh veterinary feldshers graduated from the Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host in 1881. By early 1884, three cohorts of Kazakh students had completed the full course of study, totaling nine graduates. These individuals were assigned by Order No. 34 of 17 March 1884 of the Steppe Governor-Generalship as follows:

“Within the Akmolinsk Oblast: to Omsk Uyezd (District) – Mustafa Akkozov; to Petropavlovsk Uyezd – Mustafa Dairbayev; to Kokchetav Uyezd – Seitkasim Kapin; to Atbasar Uyezd – from Petropavlovsk Uyezd – Tastemir Dzhansarin; to Akmolinsk Uyezd – from Ust-Kamenogorsk Uyezd – Imanbai Ultambayev. Within the Semipalatinsk Oblast: to Pavlodar Uyezd – Temirbai Baichulakov; to Semipalatinsk Uyezd – from Ust-Kamenogorsk Uyezd – Akhtemir Tyubekpayev; to Ust-Kamenogorsk Uyezd – Bakhtiyar Erdenev; to Karkaraly Uyezd – Salykpai Baysaitov” (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2918. L. 24–24ob.). On the basis of the Rules of 16 March 1884, “in order to protect Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) domestic animals from diseases and to suppress them in the event of their appearance, one veterinary feldsher from among Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) boys who had been trained at the expense of Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) communities at the Omsk Veterinary School and had completed the course of study there was appointed to each district of the region, with a salary of 180 rubles per year for these feldshers, to be paid from communal levies collected from the Kirgiz (Kazakhs – T.D.)” (Obzor..., 1889: 32).

During the initial period of its operation, the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host trained Kazakh students from the Semipalatinsk and Akmolinsk oblasts, which were directly under the jurisdiction of the Steppe Governor-Generalship. From the Semirechye Region, only two Kazakhs underwent training: Aikhodzha Aldiyarov, a Kazakh from the Kopal District of the Semirechye Region and a scholarship holder of the Semirechye Region, who studied in 1884–1885 and is known to have completed the first year of study (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2918. L. 18); and Iskak Konurkuldzhinov, a Kazakh from the Kopal District of the Semirechye Region and a scholarship holder from 1884 to 1887, who completed the full course of study (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2918. L. 55).

Training at the veterinary school was likely less demanding for Kazakh students than study at the Omsk Teachers’ Seminary, which had opened in 1872. This is evidenced by a petition submitted in August 1887 to the Steppe Governor-General by Ilyas Ilgonov, a Kazakh from the Ust-Kamenogorsk District: “...in order to obtain an education, I enrolled in the Omsk Teachers’ Seminary, where I remained for two years, but upon examination I was unable to pass the examinations in all the subjects taught. By decision of the Pedagogical Council, I have now been dismissed from the Omsk Teachers’ Seminary, and therefore ... might it be possible to assign me to the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host” (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2810. L. 42–42ob.). As a result, in December 1887 he was admitted to the feldsher school on a scholarship from the Karkaraly District. There is another example of a student who initially studied at a teachers’ seminary and subsequently entered a veterinary feldsher school: Sulemdek Biizhanov, a Kazakh from *aul* (village) no. 4 of the Kotan-Bulak Volost of the Karkaraly District and a scholarship holder of the Semipalatinsk Region. He studied in the preparatory class of the Semipalatinsk Teachers’ Seminary until March 1910 and, from the autumn of 1910, continued his education at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10612. L. 304ob.).

As a rule, the majority of Kazakh applicants to the Military Veterinary Feldsher School were graduates of agricultural schools. Thus, in September 1888, Galiy Kulmetenov and Darybai Atybayev were sent from the Zaisan Agricultural School (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2996. L. 21), and in October 1889 a Kazakh from Pavlodar District, Kozhebek Tukeyev, petitioned for the admission of his son, Ilyas Kozhebekov, who at that time was studying at the Pavlodar Agricultural School (TsGA RK. F. 64. Op. 1. D. 2996. L. 36). Agricultural schools in the Steppe Region were established from the mid-1880s on the basis of previously existing Kazakh boarding schools in district towns, which had performed the functions of elementary Kazakh schools. Subsequently, the development of agricultural schools was driven by the growth of the peasant population associated with the resettlement movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host in Omsk was closed in 1894 following a fire that destroyed all of its premises. “On 29 August 1894, the Military Council resolved: ‘The Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host is to be closed as of the beginning of the 1894/95 academic year’. At the same time, from that date, 20 scholarships were established at the Tomsk Veterinary Feldsher School for the Siberian Cossack Host and two for the Semirechye Cossack Host” (Zhukova, 2012: 379–380).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the veterinary system of the Russian Empire underwent further reorganization. "In 1897, in view of the approved opinion of the State Council 'On separating the veterinary branch from the subordination of the Medical Department and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and establishing it as an independent Veterinary Administration' (PSZ RI – XVII), the structure of the veterinary service was reformed in the Siberian provinces as well" (Andriyanova, Fedotova, 2019: 257-272). In 1898, the Akmolinsk Oblast was divided into veterinary districts, and in 1899 new staffing tables were approved, which significantly increased the number of personnel through the introduction of 14 district veterinary physicians; 15 physicians assigned to livestock driving routes and stations; 8 station veterinary physicians; as well as veterinary feldshers, including 14 district feldshers, 13 assigned to livestock driving routes, and 13 station feldshers, along with and 27 veterinary guards. As a result, strict veterinary-police supervision was established over steppe fairs, herd-driven, industrial, and slaughter livestock, as well as over the transportation of livestock products. "The veterinary system was limited to livestock routes. As a result, veterinary services were generally ineffective in dealing with local livestock" (Duisebayeva, 2022: 58). The organization of veterinary supervision thus required the availability of professional personnel with both higher and secondary specialized education.

In the *Overview of the Semipalatinsk Region* for 1903, the report of the Semipalatinsk Military Governor G.S. Galkin (June 1903–April 1908) presented an assessment of veterinary affairs in the region: "The development of new veterinary and sanitary affairs in the region is also hindered by the extreme instability of the personnel of veterinary supervision. Veterinary physicians appointed to service, after completing their obligatory term, usually leave their posts, whereas the truly effective work of these specialists is possible only on the condition of a comprehensive study of the locality and the specific features of the way of life of the steppe population. In view of the foregoing, on the one hand, and the extensive development of livestock-based industry in the region, on the other, the activities of the small number of veterinary personnel continue to be predominantly veterinary-sanitary in character. This consists in monitoring the health of herd-driven livestock and the harmlessness of raw animal products, in preventing and suppressing epizootics, and in collecting the prescribed levy on industrial livestock. Other branches of veterinary activity, such as the treatment of domestic animals and the like, unfortunately, given the totality of existing conditions, cannot yet be applied in practice to the life of the nomadic steppe population, although livestock husbandry constitutes the basis of its existence" (Obzor..., 1904: 70). In 1904, A.N. Bukeikhanov, analyzing the condition of Kazakh pastoral economy in the Steppe Region, observed: "The Kirgiz (Kazakhs – T.D.) carefully conceal any outbreak of epizootic disease among their livestock from Russians in general and from veterinary supervision in particular, since until now the Kirgiz (Kazakhs – T.D.) have been more familiar with the levies that accompany the arrival of an official in the steppe, while the beneficial activity of veterinarians is unknown to them; they regard the veterinarian as the same kind of enemy as the epizootic itself" (Bukeikhanov, 2009: 101). It is evident that there was a pressing need to open a veterinary school in Omsk in order to resume the training of local veterinary personnel for service in the Steppe Region.

The Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School was opened on 1 September 1905 on the basis of an order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs addressed to the Steppe Governor-General, on the condition that the staffing tables then in force at the Tomsk School would be applied to it and that the expenses for its maintenance would be charged to local zemstvo F.s, with the proviso that, in the event of their insufficiency, the shortfall would be covered from special F.s of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10612. L. 62). Initially, the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School was designed to accommodate 40 students. The issue of establishing scholarships for Kazakhs in the Akmolinsk Oblast was raised in December 1906 in a memorandum of the Veterinary Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs addressed to the Military Governor of Akmolinsk. It stated that "...serious obstacles to the development of veterinary medical assistance for the domestic animals of the nomadic population in the steppe regions include not only the general shortage of veterinary personnel in these regions and, in particular, of veterinary feldshers serving there, ...but also, to an even greater extent, the fact that these feldshers do not know the indigenous languages and, partly because of the conditions of their service and partly because of their unfamiliarity with the harsh circumstances of nomadic life, are unable to reside outside settled localities among the nomads". Consequently, it was deemed "advisable at present to raise the question of establishing several scholarships at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School specifically for the nomadic population of the region entrusted to you" (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10612. L. 1–3ob.). However, this issue depended not only on the directives of the Akmolinsk military governor, but also on the institutional capacity of the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School itself, which was unable to accommodate more than 40 students. For this reason, in February 1907 the school's director, Yu. Teker, stated in his reply: "...in the interest of fairness, it would be advisable to allocate two of the five zemstvo scholarships of Akmolinsk Oblast currently existing at the school under my supervision exclusively to individuals from the nomadic population. In this way, the need to establish additional scholarships specifically for this category of inhabitants would be eliminated" (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10612. L. 9–10). The issue of establishing three scholarships for the training of veterinary feldshers from among Kazakhs and Kalmyks of Astrakhan Province at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School for the 1907-1908 academic year was resolved in the spring of 1907. Subsequently, scholarships for the education of Kazakhs at the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School were also established in Ural Oblast; according to the

school director, the amount of the scholarship was to be no less than 360 rubles per year. Kazakhs from Akmolinsk Oblast continued to send their children for training. In 1915, a petition was submitted by a Kazakh from Turgai Oblast, Tleugabyl Mustafinov, requesting permission to sit for the entrance examinations (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10738. L. 21). According to archival information, it was revealed that Kenzhegaliy Satayev, a Kazakh from the Uralsk Oblast, graduated the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School in June 1915 (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10738. L. 10), and in the autumn of 1915, Kuzekesh Berkaliyev, a 20-year-old Kazakh from the Uralsk Oblast, was accepted to the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10738. L.36ob.).

The reference directory *All Omsk* for 1913 provides the following information on the number and allocation of scholarships: “Maintained through scholarships allocated by: Akmolinsk Oblast – 5 at 180 rubles each; Semipalatinsk Oblast – 10 at 180 rubles each; the Siberian Cossack Host – 20 at 180 rubles each; the Amur Cossack Host – 2 at 1,880 rubles each; the Semirechye Cossack Host – 2 at 180 rubles each; Ural Oblast – 3 at 300 rubles each; Astrakhan Province for non-Russian natives (Kirgiz and Kalmyks) – 3 at 300 rubles each; and the Ministry of Internal Affairs – 2 at 180 rubles each. In addition, 2,000 rubles are allocated by Semipalatinsk Oblast for the school’s general expenses, and 1,000 rubles by Akmolinsk Oblast. Admission to the school (boarding school) was granted primarily to rural residents of the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts and to individuals belonging to the military estate of the Siberian, Semirechye, and Amur Cossack Hosts, as well as to non-Russian natives of Astrakhan Province and Ural Oblast” (Ves’ Omsk, 1913: 39). Kazakhs from Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts were admitted on a general basis; the directory does not identify separate scholarships specifically designed for them. Students admitted to the school were placed on full state maintenance. The duration of study was three years.

As a result of archival research, it was possible to establish that the total number of Kazakhs who were students and graduates of the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) and the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917) amounted to 64 individuals whose information has been preserved in archival documents of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Historical Archive of Omsk Oblast. Of these, the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894) accounted for 24 graduates and 10 students who studied in different years. At the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917), the corresponding figures include 7 graduates, 16 students who studied between 1905 and 1915, and 7 Kazakhs who submitted petitions for admission in 1915; thus, a total of 30 individuals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Almost all of them served as volost-level Kazakh veterinary feldshers within the boundaries of the *uyezds* (districts) from which they originated, usually in close proximity to their parents and relatives. However, there were cases in which graduates were assigned to other *uyezds*, which significantly complicated both everyday life and the performance of official duties for Kazakh volost veterinary feldshers, especially during the 1880–1890s. Salary payments to those graduates who completed their studies in 1881–1883 were virtually not made until the approval of the Regulations of 16 March 1884. Thus, Mustafa Akkozov, a graduate of 1881, submitted a petition in December 1881 stating that: “... from the day of confirmation in that rank (veterinary feldsher – T.D.) to the present time I have received no maintenance whatsoever, although I have already appealed several times to the Omsk *uyezd* chief and to the military governor of Akmolinsk Oblast” (IAOO. F. 3. Op. 9. D. 15948. L. 78ob.). In September 1883, the military governor of Akmolinsk Oblast, having collected 40 communal resolutions from Kazakh volosts concerning the collection of F.s intended for the payment of veterinary feldshers’ salaries, requested authorization “to grant monetary remuneration to those feldshers who have completed the course and are performing their duties in the *uyezds*, in accordance with their labor, pending the approval of proposals for the establishment in the Oblast of supernumerary feldshers from among the scholarship holders of Kirgiz (Kazakh – T.D.) societies being trained at the feldsher school” (IAOO. F. 3. Op. 9. D. 15948. L. 94–95). In March 1893, Mustafa Akkozov, a volost veterinary feldsher in Omsk Uyezd, requested leave up to and including dismissal from service, stating that “given the very modest maintenance I receive in my capacity as a veterinary feldsher – only 15 rubles per month – I have unequivocally fallen into extreme destitution... Moreover, I am a man burdened with a family, and the remuneration received is far from sufficient to sustain my household; therefore, I most humbly venture to request that Your High Nobility grant me one month’s leave, and, failing this, I most humbly ask to be released entirely from service and from the duties of a veterinary feldsher” (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 85). Thus, Mustafa Akkozov, having served as a veterinary feldsher in Omsk Uyezd from 1881 to 1893, was dismissed on 16 April 1893 in accordance with his petition. Requests for leave were generally connected with the desire to visit parents or relatives, particularly when Kazakh veterinary feldshers were assigned to service in an uyezd other than their place of origin. For example, in July 1893 the Akmolinsk volost veterinary feldsher Bisembai Berdin requested “one month’s leave to Kokchetav Uyezd to visit his parents”, since “having already been in service in Akmolinsk Uyezd for six years, he had no opportunity to see his parents” (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 98). Bisembai Berdin, who served as a volost veterinary feldsher in Akmolinsk Uyezd from 1887 to 1894, was dismissed from his post in November 1894. Amre Isin, a graduate of 1884, served as a volost veterinary feldsher in Atbasar Uyezd from 1884 to 1889. After completing the mandatory period of service required in return for the right to education, in January 1890 he requested transfer for a subsequent five-year term to Omsk Uyezd, where his parents

resided (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 48-49). However, on 23 January 1890 he was instead assigned to Petropavlovsk Uyezd. He submitted several petitions requesting transfer to Omsk Uyezd in order to be closer to his parents due to their illness, including petitions dated 16 April 1890 and 26 May 1891, in which he noted: "At present I am in service in Petropavlovsk Uyezd, where I am compelled to reside in rented accommodations and to pay dearly for them, such that the maintenance I receive is barely sufficient to subsist with my wife. Therefore, I most respectfully venture to request, if possible, that I be transferred to service in Omsk Uyezd, where my expenses could be lower due to the proximity of my parents' place of residence" (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 66). In June 1891, he was dismissed in accordance with his petition: "Regarding my dismissal from service due to domestic circumstances and the illness of my mother, as I have completed the obligatory term of service required in return for the right to education" (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 71).

The insufficient remuneration associated with the position of volost veterinary feldsher – together with the conditions of service – likely provoked discontent among Kazakh veterinary feldshers, which in turn was reflected in their conduct. A veterinary physician seconded to Akmolinsk Oblast wrote on 24 June 1891 concerning the volost veterinary feldsher Tastemir Dzhansarin: "the Akmolinsk veterinary feldsher Tastemir Dzhansarin displays insubordination, fails to comply with my lawful demands, deliberately misinterprets the orders of the authorities, and generally conducts himself in a highly insolent manner" (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 24. L. 78). Tastemir Dzhansarin was dismissed from service on 2 July 1891 by Order No. 34 of the Akmolinsk governor.

In characterizing the professional careers of Kazakh veterinary feldshers, it can be stated that only four graduates of veterinary feldsher schools advanced along the service hierarchy to the level of uyezd- or station-level veterinary feldsher, or to positions within the Resettlement Administration at the oblast level. Of these, only one was a graduate of the Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host (1879–1894), while three were graduates of the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School (1905–1917).

Let us turn to a brief characterization of these graduates.

*Temirbek Aldibayev*, born in 1869, a Kazakh from Kokchetav Uyezd, was a graduate of the Military Veterinary Feldsher School of the Siberian Cossack Host in 1890. He served as a volost veterinary feldsher in Kokchetav Uyezd (1890–1900), as an uyezd veterinary paramedic of the 8th section of Kokchetav Uyezd (1900–1904), district veterinary feldsher of the 13<sup>th</sup> district of Akmolinsk Uyezd (1904–1905). From 1905 to 1908, he held the position of station (*punkt*) veterinary feldsher on the guard and quarantine line in Akmolinsk Uyezd. He subsequently served as a veterinary feldsher in Atbasar Uyezd (1908–1909). On 24 August 1909, he was reassigned as a steppe station feldsher to the town of Kokchetav (1909-1913), and from January 1913 he attained the rank of first-class station veterinary feldsher. (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 105. L. 12ob.).

*Blyal Moldybayev*, a Kazakh from Aul No. 5 of Airtav Volost, Kokchetav Uyezd, was 17 years old in 1909. He was a graduate of the Kzyl-Agach aul school of the Ministry of Public Education and a scholarship holder of Akmolinsk Oblast. From 12 May 1912, he served as a station veterinary feldsher at the Ulentinsky veterinary station in Akmolinsk Oblast, with a salary of 480 rubles per year and travel allowances of 50 rubles (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 3. L. 42ob.).

*Baiakhmet Rustembekov*, a Kazakh from Aul No. 11 of Chubartavskaya Volost, Karkaraly Uyezd, was a graduate of the Karkaraly two-class Russian Kazakh school (1910). He was a scholarship holder of Semipalatinsk Oblast and a graduate of the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School in 1913. From 31 May 1913 he was seconded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a veterinary feldsher, with a salary of 790 rubles (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 2. D. 3. L. 44). From 1 July 1918, he served as a veterinary feldsher in the Akmolinsk Oblast Zemstvo (Ulenty tract, Blagovatnoe village, Akmolinsk Oblast). In December 1919, he was listed among the veterinary personnel of the Veterinary Department of the Omsk Revolutionary Committee (Revkom), stationed in the village of Alekseevsky, Akmolinsk Oblast.

*Kussain Berdybayev*, a Kazakh from the Kuvsky Volost of Karkaraly Uyezd, was a scholarship holder of Akmolinsk Oblast and a graduate of the Omsk Veterinary Feldsher School in 1915. He served as a veterinary feldsher of the Resettlement Administration in Akmolinsk Oblast and as a veterinary feldsher at the Samarkand veterinary station from 20 May 1915. In December 1919, he was listed among the veterinary personnel of the Veterinary Department of the Omsk Revolutionary Committee (Revkom) (TsGA RK. F. 369. Op. 1. D. 10738. L.10).

The majority of graduates of the Omsk Veterinary School performed the duties of volost veterinary feldshers within Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts. The career ceiling for Kazakh veterinary feldshers was determined by their functional designation: they were trained and appointed exclusively for grassroots veterinary and sanitary work within the volosts of their respective uyezds. Their professional status was confined to the authority of local officials; moreover, advancement to the level of a veterinary physician required higher education, which was extremely difficult to obtain in the absence of a gymnasium-level education.

## 5. Conclusion

The institutionalization of veterinary administration in the Russian Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century signified official recognition of the strategic importance of controlling epizootic diseases. However,

in peripheral regions such as the Kazakh Steppe, the implementation of this policy was uneven. On the one hand, there was an acute demand for local personnel – Kazakh veterinary feldshers who possessed both traditional practical experience and elements of scientific knowledge. On the other hand, the professional status and financial position of these specialists remained limited, as their remuneration was drawn from “local funds” rather than from the state treasury. This arrangement reflected the pragmatic approach of the imperial authorities to the integration and modernization of veterinary services in the borderlands. For Kazakhs, the principal expectations associated with veterinary education lay in the fact that even training at the feldsher level opened access to state service, albeit primarily at the volost level, thereby conferring a degree of prestige and relative stability. Moreover, veterinary training enabled graduates to provide assistance to their own communities in combating livestock diseases (epizootics), a matter of particular importance under conditions of shrinking pasturelands and transformations in the traditional economic model. Access to formal education created opportunities for a degree of social mobility among Kazakhs. In essence, this constituted one of the few social elevators within the imperial system that allowed individuals to transcend the boundaries of the traditional social hierarchy. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, under the influence of modernization processes and a growing aspiration to participate in the socio-political life of the empire, the overall inclination toward education within Kazakh society increased markedly. This period was characterized by the active formation of a national intelligentsia, a segment of which was comprised of veterinary feldshers.

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