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### Veterinary Activities of General Inspectorates in the Early Republican Period in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia

#### Abstract

After the First World War, the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 and immediately embarked on nation-building. In the early years, uprisings such as the Nestorian and Sheikh Sait revolts occurred in the eastern and southeastern provinces. In response, the First General Inspectorate was established in 1927 to secure order and promote nationalization and centralization across Elâzığ, Urfa, Bitlis, Van, Hakkari, Diyarbakır, Siirt, and Mardin. Under its first inspector, İbrahim Tali Öngören, the institution combined security measures with economic development programs. A Veterinary Office was founded to advance animal husbandry, focusing on Arabian horse breeding and organizing horse races and animal exhibitions to encourage production. Efforts also targeted the expansion of sheep, goat, and cattle breeding and the promotion of beekeeping, while combating regional epizootic diseases. Official reports from the Inspectorate and the Gendarmerie General Command show a marked rise in livestock numbers and increased budgetary allocations for veterinary services in the years following its establishment.

**Keywords:** First General Inspectorate, Veterinary Office, History of Veterinary Medicine, Development, Southeastern Anatolia

### Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Umum Müfettişliklerin Veterinerlik Faaliyetleri

#### Öz

Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nın ardından 1923’te Türkiye Cumhuriyeti kurulmuş ve derhal ulus inşa sürecine başlanmıştır. Cumhuriyet’in ilk yıllarında, doğu ve güneydoğu illerinde Nasturi İsyanı ve Şeyh Sait İsyanı gibi ayaklanmalar meydana gelmiştir. Bu gelişmelere yanıt olarak, 1927’de Elâzığ, Urfa,

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*Bitlis, Van, Hakkâri, Diyarbakır, Siirt ve Mardin illerini kapsayacak şekilde, bölgede düzeni sağlamak ve ulusallaştırma ile merkezileştirme politikalarını ilerletmek amacıyla Birinci Umum Müfettişlik kurulmuştur. İlk umum müfettiş İbrahim Tali Öngören'in yönetiminde kurum, güvenlik önlemlerini ekonomik kalkınma programlarıyla birleştirmiştir. Hayvancılığı geliştirmek amacıyla bir Veteriner Dairesi kurulmuş; özellikle Arap atı yetiştiriciliğine odaklanılmış, at yetiştiriciliğini teşvik etmek için at yarışları ve hayvan sergileri düzenlenmiştir. Ayrıca koyun, keçi ve sığır yetiştiriciliğinin yaygınlaştırılması ile arıcılığın teşvik edilmesi hedeflenmiş, bölgedeki salgın hayvan hastalıklarıyla mücadele edilmiştir. Birinci Umum Müfettişlik ve Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı raporları, kuruluşun ardından bölgede hayvan varlığında belirgin bir artış ve veteriner hizmetlerine ayrılan bütçede önemli bir yükseliş olduğunu göstermektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Birinci Umum Müfettişlik, Veterinerlik Bürosu, Veterinerlik Tarihi, Kalkınma, Güneydoğu Anadolu

## Introduction

The Ottoman Empire, defeated in the First World War, signed the Armistice of Mudros after the war. Many regions of Anatolia were occupied after the armistice and the National Struggle was started in response to these occupations. After winning the National Struggle that is the battle of existence of Anatolia, the Republic of Turkey was declared in 1923. With the declaration of the Republic, a rapid development, nationalization and centralization policy began to be followed in Anatolia. However, in the Eastern Anatolia, riots such as the Nestorian Revolt and Sheikh Sait Revolt were broke out, which both interrupted the development initiatives and aimed to disrupt the national unity. Correspondingly, the First General Inspectorate was established in 1927 to take quick measures against these riots in the region, to establish the power of the central administration and to develop the region. A veterinary office along with the other offices was also established in this institution which acted like the state of emergency regional governor's office. In addition to animal breeding activities, the veterinary office also fought epidemics in the region. The contributions of the veterinary office to the regional animal husbandry were evaluated in the study. The boundaries of the research include the region where the First General Inspectorate governed and the years of 1928-1937 when this institution was active. In the study, the minutes of the General Inspectorate meetings, the reports of the General Inspectors and the memoirs of the officials working then in the Inspectorate were used.

General Inspectorates are the institutions established to carry out the internal administration properly and to extend the control and service of the central government to the provinces during the one-party period. This institution is no stranger to Anatolia. The institution, which has been in existence since the Ottoman Empire period, has taken names starting from the reign of Abdulhamid II until the 1950s such as *General Governorship*,

*Provincial Governorship, Public Governorship, Governorship of the state of emergency, Khedivate, Regional Governorship, Super Governorship, Inspectorship, General Inspectorate.* The general inspectorates are institutions established to ensure the integrity of the region with other regions, taking into account the distance to the capital and transportation difficulties (Koçak, 2015, p. 25).

Although it varies according to the conditions of the regions where they are established, the organizational structure of the General Inspectorate has been established as General Inspectorate Offices, Courthouse, Health Department, Police Department, Finance Department, Education, Agriculture, Veterinary, Public Works and Economics consultancies, Gendarmerie Command, Private Secretarial Office, Statistical Office, Editorial Office, Documents and Supplies (Özmen, 1947). The First General Inspection region covering the provinces of Elazığ, Urfa, Bitlis, Van, Hakkari, Diyarbakır, Siirt and Mardin was established on June 20, 1927, and in accordance with the law number of 1164 (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 030.18.01/57.70.15; Düstur, 1946, p.1005). Ibrahim Tali (Ongoren) was appointed to be the First General Inspector (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, November 26, 1927). After him, Hilmi Ergenli was appointed as the General Inspector of the Region in 1933. Abidin Ozmen succeeded him and took over the office in 1935.

According to the act of the General Inspectorate, the settlement problems of the people of the region would be solved, the villagers would be made landowners, the development activities would be completed, and the economic and social needs of the people of the region would be resolved as soon as possible (Düstur, 1946, p.1006). This extraordinarily authorized institution maintained its existence until the complete abolition of the annexes with the Law on the Establishment of the General Inspectorate on June 19, 1962 (TBMM Tutanak Journal, 1962). The majority of the people living in the First General Inspectorate region occupied with animal husbandry. For this reason, Veterinary Office of General Inspectorate attached importance to the development of animal husbandry in the region. Hence, veterinarians were appointed to the region for this purpose. Mustafa Bazoglu, Nurettin Aral and Burhan Jeller worked then in the regional veterinary office of the First Inspectorate. Because the First General Inspection region was established in a territory where the revolts took place, the main aim of the institution was to maintain safety and economic development in the region. In addition, popularizing the use of Turkish language, increasing the trust of people towards the state and civil servants, and strengthening the connection between the center and the region were among the purposes of this institution. As well as helping the development of animal husbandry in the region, the veterinary office was expected to carry out the activities mentioned above. For

example, at the General Inspectorate meeting in 1934, the First General Inspector Abidin Ozmen presented a report about the region in which he regarded the veterinary practices within the scope of both economic and propaganda activities of the region. According to Ozmen, it was one of the measures considered to increase the influence of the inspectorate that the agricultural officers and the veterinarians' being cavalry and mobile and constantly wandering around the villages and making propaganda to the villagers.

We can learn about the relationships of the General Inspectorate Veterinary officers with the people of the region from the memoirs published by Burhan Jeller (1938). Jeller described their relationships with the people in the region as warm and sincere. He stated that they were in the villages with Nurettin Aral almost every day and that they were welcomed by the villagers. Jeller also made a point that Turkish-speaking villagers were generally above middle age. He mentioned that they sought to encourage Turkish by speaking to young people in Turkish. According to Jeller, the people of the region were more interested in animal husbandry than agriculture, and accordingly they were very content with the veterinary services coming to their villages. However, there is no evidence in his memoirs that Jeller specifically engaged in propaganda activities.

However, in the history of the Republic of Turkey, the idea of benefiting from veterinarians like other civil servants in propaganda activities was not limited to the era of General Inspectors. In 1946, the Republican People's Party had Dr. Celal Morel prepare a report on propaganda work. It was stated in his report that doctors, agricultural specialists and veterinarians could be utilized particularly during election periods, as they are to be accepted as people who are heard and trusted by the public and the villagers. Morel even supported his idea with examples. According to the narration by Morel, there was an epidemic of scarlet fever in a village, and a doctor went to the region to fight the epidemic. Celal Morel asked this doctor to be the presiding officer of the polls on the Election Day, and they attained the election results they wanted, with a few exceptions. In another example, he describes that he benefited in the same way from an agriculturalist, who was trusted by villagers and who established large orchards in the village (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 490-1-0-0/ 572-2277-1).

## **1. The First General Inspectorate Region Reclamation Works**

### **1.1. Horse Breeding in The Region**

The history of horse breeding in eastern Anatolia dates back to ancient times. Horses in and around Van province are mentioned even in Evliya Celebi's travelogue. When Celebi went to Van with Melik Ahmet Pasha, under the title of Evsaf-i Alay-i Askeri (characteristics of

Regimental Soldiers) he described the horses on which the Deli (Fearless Ottoman Soldiers) and Volunteer soldiers ridden as following;

*“I saw beautiful well-fed and large Arabian horses that had a stone encolure, a short-waisted ox wrist, apple eyes. All horses were red and there was the shape of the Danube crossing in blood red on their dewlap and bellies. He says that the soldiers were riding on saddled and flamboyant Arabian horses of which very few were armored. The horses had Bahri hotoz (a kind of sea bird) bosom, iron shield foreheads, iron spear saddles, tiger and pepper hides.”*

As it can be understood from the regiment reports, the most distinguished cavalry horses of the territory that gained a high position to show themselves in parades were raised in this region (Çevik, 2012, p. 154).

The subject of horse breeding in the region, which had also found a place in the Evliya Celebi's travelogue, was an issue that the First General Inspectorate also focused on. In Urfa, Mardin and Diyarbakır, the Inspectorate made attempts especially for Arabian horse breeding. According to the report of the General Inspectorate, the Arabian horse used in the breeding of warm-blooded horses in the world enabled the generation of many hybrid horse breeds in developed countries in horse breeding. However, the number of Arabian horses decreased as they suffered a lot of casualties in their homeland, Arabia, during the First World War. Since foreigners had taken these horses to their countries at all costs, it became almost impossible to find Arabian horses with the true characteristics of the breed in Iraq, Syria and Necit. For this reason, a science delegation was sent to Arabia by the government to bring Arabian horses to the stallion depot planned to be established in Diyarbakır for Arabian horse breeding. The stallion depot, established in Diyarbakır in 1928, was delegated to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1934. There were very distinguished Arabian horses in the depot, which was put into operation by the Ministry in 1935. Stallions such as Kuruşan, Rapdan, Nassaf, Aldervis were among those distinguished breeds. In 1937, the depot contained 15 heads including stallions and stud donkeys. Since 1935, the stallions at the depot have been mated 1,745 times with mares of the local people. The total of 872 purebred Arabian horses was registered in the herd book through the depot. In addition, 22 Stallions have also been registered as stud qualified (Birinci Genel Müfettişlik Bölgesi Raporları, 1939). The horse breeding in the region was carried out under the responsibility of Nurettin Aral, one of the important experts of the period. Burhan Jeller mentions in his memoirs that Nurettin Aral endeavoured a lot of effort into developing horse breeding in the region. As we can learn from Jeller's memoirs that Aral went to Austria and Hungary for this purpose to conduct studies (Jeller, 1938). Nurettin Aral, a specialist in

zootechnics, went to Iraq for three months along with Selahattin Batu, who came on a temporary assignment to the First General Inspectorate in 1937, to research on Arab horses and to bring stallions. He also put effort to bring horses to the region (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 30-18-1/272-15-4). In addition to these breeding initiatives, horse races were held in Diyarbakir and in some other provinces of the First General Inspectorate to encourage horse breeding. For example, horse races have been held every year in the spring and autumn seasons in Diyarbakir since 1928 and a total prize of 58,295 Liras were distributed in those races. Other than regional horse racings, animal exhibitions were organized in Diyarbakir in the autumn season for the encouragement of animal breeding. A total of 24,341 Liras prize money has been distributed to those awarded at the exhibitions since 1928. In addition, besides Diyarbakır, horse races between 1934-1936 in Muş, horse races and animal exhibition in Urfa in the autumn of 1936, horse race in Bitlis in 1936, horse races in Van in 1926, 1928, 1929 and 1931 and horse races and animal exhibitions in Siirt in 1932 and 1936 were organized, thus efforts were made to make animal husbandry attractive in the region with social activities (First General Inspectorate Report, 1939, p. 418).

Moreover, for the breeding program to progress successfully in the region, bad quality animals that were not suitable for breeding were detracted from the field of activity. For this purpose, 10,345 head animals have been culled since 1928 and the loss were prevented. In addition to these practices, a stallion depot was established in the region, and at the same time, animal breeding stations were built to accommodate the stallions to be sent from the center depot during the breeding season. Those stations were located in Van, Bitlis, Mus, Mardin, Siverek, Urfa and Ergani (First General Inspectorate Report, 1939, p. 420).

## **1. 2. Cattle in the Region**

The genus of cattle in the First General Inspectorate was short horned *Bos taurus brachyceros*, belonging to the main breed. The varieties of cattle were either black or red/yellow colored; the black breed was the same as the local Anatolian cattle. However, red/yellow colored breed was located in two separate regions far from each other. Those in the north region of the Inspectorate were under the influence of cattle in Kars and Erzurum. On the other hand, the cattle in the southern region of the Inspectorate were located in and around Urfa province and under the influence of Syria's cattle breed called Beledi.

According to the inspectorate reports, although pied cattle other than the aforementioned black and red/yellow cattle breeds were also seen in the region, these were not purebred horses. In addition to cattle, it was considered that water buffalo breeding in the region should also be supported. Water buffalo breeding then was carried out in Bismil district. Breeding works have



been conducted by reserving 1,016 heads of water buffalo as stud in 1928-1937 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Gendarmerie Command Report, 1937).

### **1. 3. Sheep in the Region**

According to the Inspectorate reports, the sheep of the region are related to the fat-tailed, Morkaraman, Red Karaman and Akkaraman from the Asian sheep sample. A big change in weather conditions in the region between summer and winter months, the presence of pastures with a wide variety of grasses in the region during summer and the scarcity of fodder in winter made it necessary to breed fat-tailed sheep breeds in the region. Because, as a result of thousands of years of struggle, the sheep of the region have acquired their big tails that function as food storage in winter. Since sheep farming is the most profitable breeding branch among the terrain husbandry, increasing the number of sheep would contribute to the prosperity of the region. Breeding studies were initiated in the region for this purpose, and in sheep and goat breeding, the selection of local breeds was accepted as a principle (First General Inspectorate Report, 1939).

### **1. 4. Goats in the Region**

There were two types of goats in the Inspectorate region, namely hair and angora goats. Angora goats that were largely found around Siirt Province, were colored breeds, and there were very few white ones among them. In addition, there were also black, dark and light brown and silver colored goats in the region. Although goat farming was conducted in and around Van Province before the world war, it ended after the war. Other than Angora goat, there were also hair goats in oak areas of the Inspectorate region.

### **1. 5. Donkey and Mule Farming**

The donkey breeds in the region were under the influence of white, large-sized Necit donkeys from the south. Large mules, in particular, were used in agriculture and military purposes. Considering the interest of the people living in the region in mule farming, it was considered necessary to focus on this issue.

### **1. 6. Beekeeping in The Region**

Honey in the region was widely produced using old beekeeping practices. The beekeepers who were advised new beehive systems, were also provided with the samples. The Inspectorate also valued increasing the honey production. Annual honey production exceeded 100 tonnes and wax production 20 tonnes in the region during the First General Inspectorate period. Annual honey production during the First General Inspectorate period exceeded 100 tonnes and wax production 20 tonnes in the region (Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Gendarmerie Command Report, 1937).

## 2. Animal Health Practices in the First General Inspectorate Region

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, animal epidemics were very common in the cities where the First General Inspectorate were to be established in the following years, as in whole Anatolia with the effect of the First World War. These outbreaks affected the country in many ways. Due to animal epidemics, especially European countries opposed to import animals or animal products from Turkey, which caused a big blow to the economy of the country. In this sense, animal epidemics were addressed before the foundation of the Republic. Before the establishment of the Republican People's Party, a special attention was paid to the health and breeding of animals, one of the greatest wealth of the country, in the nine principles included in the program of the Association for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia. Preventing and restoring animal health were emphasized after the declaration of the Republic.

After the foundation of the Republic, there have also been various animal epidemics in the First Inspectorate region. Rinderpest particularly affecting the Caucasus, Iran, Iraq and Syria also invaded the region. The most experienced veterinarians were appointed to the First Inspection region by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1928 to combat the disease. The total of 11 veterinarians was assigned in Erzincan and Diyarbakir Provinces in that year (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 30-18-1/1 30-54-6). In addition, the fight groups were established to combat rinderpest. With the support of the police and gendarmerie in the region, a tough struggle for four years against rinderpest was fought. The disease was eradicated in the region in 1931. There were 24 veterinarians worked in the region during this four-year period. 685 animals were wasted, a total of 1,992 animals was culled (1,133 with compensation and 759 without compensation) and 19,064 animals exposed to contagion were treated. In addition, the attempt to establish serum manufacturing facilities in Diyarbakir in 1926 to combat rinderpest was not successful due to lack of budget (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 30-10-0/186-282-13).

Nurettin Aral and Selahattin Batu, veterinarians of the First General Inspectorate, went to Syria and Iraq and examined the common infectious diseases in animals on the spot (Turkish Republic's Presidential Archive, 30-18-1/2-39-6518). In his memoirs, Jeller described the fight against epidemics in the region as follows:

*"In addition to rinderpest, measures were taken against anthrax in the region and the animals of the region were vaccinated. Distofajin was either available or was supplied in the cheapest price and shortest time when requested, against the endemic and parasitic*



*diatomaceous diseases. In the meantime, the struggle has also continued against the two important diseases in the region, glanders and dourine, which have manifested for years.”* (Jeller, 1938, s. 17-18).

According to Burhan Jeller, in addition to combating those diseases, various measures were taken against other possible epidemics in the region. Since animals exported to Syria, Palestine and Egypt passed through the Inspectorate region, they were subjected to a veterinary inspection at the stations established in the region. The same practice was also applied to animals moving between summer and winter pastures. Those animals were allowed to move after subjecting to a veterinary inspection. As we learnt from Jeller’ memoirs, in the spring of 1938, various horses not useful for breeding were castrated in Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa provinces; in the same year, a team including a chief and 27 veterinarians vetted the animals for dourine in three districts of the region, and the blood of animals suspected of the disease was taken and sent for analysis (Jeller, 1938). In addition, in the spring of 1938, the foot and mouth disease began to appear in the First General Inspectorate region, especially in Diyarbakır, and it rapidly spread to Mardin, Urfa, Mus and Bitlis provinces. Moreover, Munir Oskay published an article to raise awareness among the people in the region about how to combat the disease (Naim Bey, 1938).

### **3. Numerical Data of the Veterinary Office in the First General Inspectorate Region**

According to the statistical data obtained from the General Inspectorate report, there has been a significant increase in the number of animals reared after the establishment of veterinary (Table 1). According to documents showing the animal taxes paid in the region, the total number of animals registered in the region was 2,333,500 in the fiscal year 1927. That number increased to 3,951,742 in fiscal year 1938 as a result of the development activities conducted by the general inspectorates in the region (Birinci Umum Müfettişlik Raporu, 1939). According to what we learned from the reports of the Gendarmerie General Command, public health, agriculture, and veterinary health were among the issues that general inspectorates most focused on and wanted to allocate a budget. However, those reports also indicated that, the budget allocated for agriculture and veterinary affairs were 1,722,601 Liras in 1928, which came after the shares allocated for roads, education, and health services. Table 2 shows the total budget allocated for each province in the General Inspectorate and the amounts allocated for agriculture and veterinary affairs in the fiscal year 1928.

Six percent of the total budget in 1930-1934 and eight percent in 1934-1937 were allocated to veterinary affairs in the provinces aforementioned above (Birinci Umum Müfettişlik Raporu, 1939).

## Conclusion

The General Inspectorates, similar to the state of emergency regional governorships, are the institutions that were established generally in the riots regions in the first years of the Republic. These institutions were responsible for the safety and development of the region they governed. In that sense, they are the institutions undertaking the duties of centralization and nationalization. The First General Inspectorate was established in 1927, covering the provinces of Elazığ, Urfa, Bitlis, Van, Hakkari, Diyarbakir, Siirt and Mardin. After ensuring the safety and order of these provinces, the First General Inspectorate has established various offices to provide development in line with the needs of the region. In the present study, we examined the activities of Veterinary Office in the first General Inspectorate by using the documents found in The Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the General Inspectorate reports, Gendarmerie General Command reports and the memoirs published. The present study indicates that the Veterinary Office in the First General Inspectorate focused on animal breeding issues in the region and worked particularly on Arabian horse breeding. The appointment of Nurettin Aral, one of the important specialists in zootechnics in Turkey, in that office shows the importance that the Government attaches to Animal Husbandry of the region. In addition to horse breeding, the number of animals in the region increased significantly after the establishment of the General Inspectorate, as can be seen from either the tax documents or the reports examined. In addition, as also can be seen from the reports, the share allocated to veterinary affairs from the budget has increased every year during that period.

Veterinarians were also expected to participate in propaganda activities to contribute the nationalization process, another duty of the General Inspectorates, but apart from encouraging Turkish in the region, there was no data showing that the officers of the General Inspection Veterinary Office worked within the scope of these activities.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

Autor declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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## Ekler

*Table 1. Animal Number in 1929 and 1936*

<b>Animals</b>	<b>1929</b>	<b>1936</b>
Sheep	973,388	<u>2,014,957</u>
Hair goat	662,97	<u>1,241,361</u>
Angora goat	100,814	216,578
Cattle	202,532	470,381
Water buffalo	8,231	22,227
<u>Camel</u>	5,74	12,297
Donkey	42	104,106
Horse	16,763	41,784

*Table 2. The budget of the General Inspectorate (1928)*

Provinces	Budget	Allocation amount for agriculture and veterinary affairs
Diyarbakir	318281	12224
<u>Mardin</u>	205848	5949
<u>Muş</u>	163619	7710
<u>Siirt</u>	109581	1381
Urfa	253106	7394
Van	170234	11979
<u>Hakkari</u>	69070	4809
<u>Bitlis</u>	111672	883
Total	1404411	52529
Rate		% 4

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