

Thank you and welcome to our webinar audience. My name is Gary Sherman and I'll be your host for today's webinar, addressing the Veterinary Services Grant Program implementation. I serve as USDA NIFA's National Program Leader for veterinary science and animal agro security and I previously led the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, also known as VMLRP. Dr. Danielle Tack has recently taken over the leadership of the VMLRP, while I'm program lead for the Veterinary Services Grant Program. I'm just one of the large team of dedicated NIFA administrative professionals bringing subject matter policy communications and other administrative expertise to the table.

As we work to stand up this new program aimed at enhancing food supply veterinary coverage in veterinary shortage areas within the United States. The purpose of today's second and final stakeholder listening session is to give all interested parties an opportunity to provide comment and suggestions to NIFA in advance of development of the first request for applications and drafting the rules for this new program. The RFA is tentatively targeted for release in late April so we are on a tight timeline. Thank you for joining us on today's call. Your input is welcome and essential. I will first give a brief presentation providing a summary of the program based on authorizing language.

During this summary, I'll highlight some specific questions we seek stakeholder advice about, but discussion does not need to be limited to the questions we post. Please hold comments and questions to the end of the presentation. There are 2 ways for you to enter a question into the queue. The first is according to the instructions the teleconference operator will give you in just a moment. The second is by posting a question in the webinar chat box. When asking a question by phone, please first give your name and state your affiliation clearly when called upon by the moderator to speak. Question submitted by the chat box should also include commenter's name and affiliation.

If we do not have time to get to your question or comment, we will have recorded them and our NIFA team will take them into account as the first RFA and federal rules are drafted. Please be concise and limit your comment or questions to a maximum of 2 minutes. More lengthy input may be submitted in writing to the Veterinary Services Grant Program email which is vsgp@nifa.usda.gov. Input will be taken there through 5:00 pm Eastern Time on February 29th. Shelly, would you please provide again instructions regarding questions and comments by phone.

I'd be happy to Gary. If you would like to ask a question at any time during this conference, you may place yourself in the question queue by pressing pound, 2 on your telephone keypad. When we get to the Q&A section, you'll hear notification when your line is unmuted, at that time, you could state your name and affiliation along with your question.

Thank you Shelley. Let's begin the presentation which will be fairly brief but will give us a basis for our later discussion. First, we will discuss Veterinary Services Grant Program legislative background. This program was authorized in the 2014 farm bill, but it was not first funded until this fiscal year, 2016. The amount that was appropriated is \$2.5 million. It includes a maximum indirect costs claimable by an applicant

of 30% of the total grant amount. The overall goal of this program is to help mitigate food and supply and public health veterinary storage situations. Based on manager's notes, when those are being discussed, the VMLRP which is the program we have been operating here at NIFA for the last 6 years or so was just the first step. Now, the Veterinary Services Grant Program is the next step to support shortages in veterinary areas. Our timeline is shown on this slide. Late April is when we anticipate and again, this is a tentative timeline, we anticipate the request for applications will be published. Mid-June applications will be due via Grants.gov. We'll discuss that more in a bit. In August, we anticipate holding the peer review panels that maybe as early as late July, those scheduling events are still being developed and by September 15th, we hope to have award funds obligated.

Our grant proposal evaluation process, as is the case for most of our programs here at NIFA, involving competitive peer review process and that involves a merit review of application by external experts that are brought in to give a fair and transparent analysis of the respective applications. Ranking criteria will at this point, this is what we are thinking will roughly include tactical and strategic merit of the proposal, applicant capability so here, we're talking knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience of individuals or teams, you'll see we'll discuss about the advantage to collaborating on these proposals, and the potential to enhance veterinary services in highest priority shortage situations. All proposals will need to address this last bullet.

Again, the purpose of the Veterinary Services Grant Program is generally to develop implementing sustained veterinary services and relieve veterinary shortage situations and the veterinary shortage situations that we're speaking to are those as designated by the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. There are some other criteria that must be met regarding definitions and we'll discuss that in a bit. There are two competitively awarded program areas broadly authorized under this program. One, we are abbreviating as the education grants part of this program and the other would be classified as equipment grants.

There are 3 different types of shortages in the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. For those of you who are familiar with that program, it is really the types 1 and 2 which are private practice shortage situations that we will be referring to later with respect to the equipment grants. Continuing with the purpose of Veterinary Services Grant Program, again, the specific objective is, of the education grants section is to substantially relieve veterinary shortage situations through education extension and training programs. Specific objective of the equipment grants is to establish or expand veterinary practices in shortage situations, designated by the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program and those shortage areas must be in rural areas as defined by the reference cited below on this slide. The information about that can be easily Googled by we will be providing that language in our RFA so that folks can determine that if they fit both of those criteria.

Throughout this talk, we will prompt you with questions and we hope that you will think about and provide us some feedback on. The first key question we'd like to present to our stakeholders is, of the 2.4 million

and I say 2.4 versus the 2.5 because 2.5 was the amount that is appropriated and a certain amount is taken off for operations of the agency that administers, so that would be NIFA, so the amount to states is roughly 2.4 million available for the Veterinary Services Grant Program. How much should be devoted to the education versus the equipment grants?

The 2 components will be reviewed separately. That is those submitting for equipment compete with other equipment request proposals and those submitting for education will compete with education type proposals. As you will see moving to our next topic, qualified applicants differ for each of these. There are 7 broad categories of qualified applicants and we'll go through the 7, this is unique to this program with respect to the broad availability of qualified applicants. The first are US based entities and that's for profit or not for profit and individuals operating a veterinary clinic that provide veterinary service in a VMLRP designated shortage situation and in a rural area as defined. The second area of qualified applicant is state, national, allied or regional veterinary organizations or specialty boards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Colleges or schools or veterinary medicine accredited by the AVMA may apply. University research or veterinary medical foundations may apply. Departments of veterinary science or comparative medicine accredited by the Department of Education, state agricultural experiment stations and state local for tribal government agencies.

There are a few specific considerations provided in the authorizing language. One of these is preference will be given to qualified applicants who provide documentation of coordination with other qualified applicants.

Based on the legislative requirement for prioritizing funding, the request for application will specify that application's proposing collaboration among qualified entities, will be strengthened. There are also a list of eligibility requirements which include the following, qualified applicants may receive grants to carry out programs or activities that will first substantially relieve veterinary shortage situations. This is a very broad category that is important to me. Support or facilitate private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities is the second eligibility requirement.

Two more key questions, how should veterinary public health activities be defined and what proportion of the practice needs to be engaged in public health activities for the second item in the last slide?

Under education grants, there are 5 broad areas that are allowed to help relieve veterinary shortage situations. The first is promote recruitment, placement and retention of veterinarians, veterinary technicians, students of veterinary medicine, and students of veterinary technology are those in secondary education which includes grades six through 12. Second is expenses for the following to attend food safety or food animal medicine training programs. Those eligible for this would be veterinary students, interns, externs, fellows, and residents and veterinary technicians. The third is establish or expand accredited veterinary

education, residency, fellowship, and internships and externship programs. This includes faculty retention and recruitment. The fourth is provide continuing education extension include veterinary telemedicine and other distance-based education. And, the last is provide technical assistance for developing and validating designated veterinary shortage situations as defined under the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program.

Two more key questions, given the expedited timeline and limited funding, how should NIFA prioritize education projects? Should the focus be on, for example, recruitment continuing education, technical assistance? Should it be on strengthening the academic pipeline or should it emphasize projects for current practitioners including veterinary technicians and other health professionals or is there some other priority that should be looked at?

For equipment grants that are available to for profit and not for profit entities or individuals operating veterinary clinics and then they only these funds to establish or expand veterinary practices by the following 3 types of purposes. Equipping veterinary offices, sharing in the reasonable overhead cost of such veterinary practices or establishing mobile veterinary facilities of which a portion of the facilities will address education or extension needs. It's important to note that equipment grants cannot be used for certain purposes. These includes for new construction of a building or facility or to acquire, expand, remodel or alter an existing building or facility including site creating and improvement in architect piece. There is also special requirement for equipment grants that is equipment grants shall be subject to agreements that includes a required term of service for the awardee.

This is one similarity to the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, which requires a term of service in exchange for service in the veterinary shortage situation. Some key questions, what types of equipment should be eligible? Should any be excluded? What are reasonable overhead cost and categories and what portion of the equipment grants awarded should address education or extension means? Some additional key questions, how long should the term of service be relative to the award amount? What should the minimum award amount be? Should there be a minimum term of service regardless of the award amount?

Under this program all applications must be submitted through grants.gov. This is different the loan repayment program. You may check the veterinary services grant program website which is ... will be under construction for a while but it already some useful information and as appropriate, new connections and links will be setup. You want to go to that website Veterinary Services Grant Program website for access to application materials and application instructions. There'll be a link there to get to grants.gov.

With respect to renewing grants, the education component may have a renewal option depending on future appropriations. If there are renewals, they will be competitive and we do not anticipate that equipment grants will be renewable. If you have questions, comments or other feedback, please submit that to the veterinary services grant program website which

is vsgrp@nifa.usda.gov, as shown on the screen and please do this before 5:00 pm on February 29th, 2016. Transcripts and additional information will be available at the veterinary services grant program website. We'll now turn over the session to our stakeholders and ask that you begin to queue yourselves up, if you haven't already and we have some slides that we will be moving through, which are the questions that were asked earlier in the slides so we couldn't get them all into one slide. There are 3 slides I believe and we'll just switch between them to remind you what those, some of those questions were and you can reference those. We'll go through those slides slowly and I would now ask Shelly to join us again to give instructions about how to queue up questions through the phone. Shelly.

Once again, as we move to Q and A, please feel free to place yourself in the question queue by pressing pound, 2 on your telephone keypad. You'll hear notification, when your line is unmuted. At that time, please state your name and your affiliation and your question. Once again, pressing pound, 2 at this time will indicate that you wish to ask a question. Do we have anyone on the line right now?

There are not yet any questions in queue. Okay, I have one, just being posted to the chat box.

Question #1 (from the chat box): The question is from LewAnn. Does the veterinarian have to practice in a 2016 VMLRP area or in a prior year VMLRP area?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary. The 2016 shortage areas will certainly be available and eligible. Whether we go back and utilize prior years, it's still under discussion. One of the issues there is, that we need to check with State Animal Health Official (SAHO) to be sure if they are not relisted, and it does not mean that they are no longer viewed by that SAHO as being a need. How far back we go in terms of permitting shortages to be considered under this program is still under discussion. We would appreciate your thoughts on that.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: As Gary said, we are looking for stakeholder input on some of the factors regarding the shortage areas, which ones you have open, how far back to go. Any thoughts or comments on that, please provide them now or if you would prefer via email at vsgrp@nifa.usda.gov.

Question #2 (from the chat box): I have another one in the chat. What specific types of collaborations are expected or encouraged?

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: This is Erin Daly from the Policy Office. The legislation is not specific about the collaborations. There aren't any limitations on qualified applicants collaborating with one another. I think what we're looking for, is how that would add value to the project. Again, these are going to be competitively peer reviewed. They will be ranked according to their merit with the peer review board.

Question #3 (from the chat box): The next question is Rod Hall, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. He is asking for us to show an example of how an equipment grant could be used.

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary. The steps quotations about what qualified equipment would be is also not made in the authorization. We are interested in your thoughts that was one of the key questions. But, one could imagine different kinds of equipment being very useful in terms of providing services to shortage situations and in public health settings for a certain percent, whatever the percent FTE environment that would be allowed. One topic that often comes up is a well-equipped mobile veterinary clinic could allow a practice to cover an area that was not formally able to cover and so, that might be eligible but we have not set the amounts yet. We're seeking your input on that as well, as to what would be the upper and lower limit of funding for equipment grants and whether or not it could supply enough funds to buy some or all of the truck or a vet box is still yet to be determined. If you think of any piece of equipment, it would have to be something that could be readily argued, would be able to help mitigate food supply veterinary shortage situation that meets the other criteria in this authorizing language.

I'm going to take a couple of more from the chat box until I turn it over to Shelly for the phone line.

Question #4 (from the chat box): The next one is from Oretta Samples. She currently works with an MPH program that's starting a concentration in agricultural epidemiology. Were the educational grants be a feasible grant for building the capacity of this program, as well as hiring an additional faculty?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I will take a stab at this at the beginning, that the key thing is that in some way, this would help mitigate the shortage situations, I believe it as something that can be considered. I will defer to anyone else in the room, from policy or our program if there is anything else they'd like to add.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary. I would just add that what is qualified as a shortage situation according to the agreements and loan repayment program to which the Veterinary Services Grant Program defers in terms of that definition, while most of those shortages are sort of geographic shortages and traditional veterinary shortages, it was allowance for disciplinary shortages including, and 3 of them that were named were epidemiology, public health and food safety as examples. Of course there is a public health bent to the Veterinary Service Grant Program. To the extent that the argument to be made that an epidemiology training program is providing for work mitigation of work force shortage for instance in areas of epidemiology, whether it's considered as shortage of those disciplinary specialties, I would think it would be eligible for these funds but a strong case would have to be made that the particular sorts of products, the epidemiology specialty training folks coming out of that program would be able to contribute to mitigating these disciplinary shortages.

The last, I'm going to take from the chat box before turning over to the phone line is from Vilma Yuzbasiyan. I apologize if I did not pronounce your last name correctly.

Question #5 (from the chat box): Wondering if there are priority training areas such as anti-microbial resistance, infectious diseases, etc?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Now, I'll take a stab at answering that first. At this time, there has not been any priorities identified. If there are certain priority you would like us to consider, we encourage you to make the comments either via the email here during the website, about what you would suggest that there should be focus on. Any of these would necessarily meet but still address how it would be helping mitigate shortage situations. Okay, I'm going to turn to you, on the phone line before I take the additional ones in the chat box.

All right. I do have a question in queue. Caller, your line is open, please go ahead.

Question #6 (from the phone): This is Nick Stregels from Colorado and I think our 2 questions have been answered but just to clarify, as far as equipment, the equipment program area, any veterinarian in the shortage areas would be qualified to apply if they can justify and if they can demonstrate that what they purchased would help them to alleviate the shortage problem, is that correct?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: Yes, that is correct. This is Gary. I would add that, to relieve the shortage situation or serve public health ends and goals. I would also add that it is not just serving a designated shortage situation under VMLRP, we have to be careful of the additional stipulation that would be defined as rural under the Rural Development Agency's definition. All of the type 2 shortages in the veterinary medicine loan repayment program, to our knowledge, are all fit both definition. It could be, however, that the type 1 shortage from the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, which includes 80% FDE requirement, they don't necessarily fall into an area of the financial but they may. It will require a little bit of effort on the part of the applicant to determine and make the case, that they there going to be providing service and have their service commitment too, would be meaningful for those definitions.

Okay. That's all.

I just wanted to also add. I'm sorry Nick, I keep interrupting you.

No, no problem. Go ahead.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I was going to say, the thing I wanted to add, let me do it again, was that there is a term of service associated with the equipment. It's not just getting the equipment. That person will have a requirement to provide services to expand or extend the services in the shortage situation. Please go forward with the other comment you had.

Question #6a (from the phone): Sure. That makes sense and thanks for that clarification. From what I heard there, a veterinarian let's say could apply for equipment needs and also provide the service that would go along with that equipment in an area that's not VMLRP but if it fits the definition of a rural area or under the rural development kind of rules criteria, that would also work.

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Unfortunately, no. The legislation says there has to be a designated veterinarian shortage situation and a rural area. Based on the legislation, and for those that are familiar with our Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program and even if you want to go check out that program's site and read about the shortage situation, I encourage you to do that and that website is www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp. On the shortage situation, the type twos by definition are required to be in a rural area so they would automatically fit those conditions under the VSGP. However, the type ones, do not have the rural requirement so the argument would need to be made that it is a primary food animal practice meaning at least 32 hours a week dedicated to food animal practice and that happens to be in a rural area because under the current VLMRP which says a designation, we don't have a rural requirement for the type 1. I hope that helps to answer the question

Yes, that does help. What's up for debate yet or, that you're taking input on is how far back to go as far as the VLMRP shortage areas that would be eligible?

Correct. As well as considering eligible entities referring, we have 2016 that will be posted by beginning of April. What should we consider as far as historical?

Thank you.

Do we have any other callers? Sorry, Nick.

Thank you very much.

There are no further questions in queue at this time.

Okay, I'm going to go ahead and address the chat box here for a little bit.

Question #7 (from the chat box): Oretta Samples had another question. She mentioned they also have an AVMA accredited program for veterinary technologist and would like to bridge the gap for students in rural areas to go from completion of undergraduate degree to the MPH program. Again, would this be a reasonable use of the educational grant?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary. I would say, yes, with all the same stipulations as we gave to the epidemiology example from a bit ago. If the program were to and you probably know there are many different tracks in MPH training. Some of those may or may not serve to defensively mitigate shortages in veterinary medicine and some, and many would. So long as the entire program open its goal is to mitigate

veterinary service shortages in the United States and a strong case can be made for that, it would be eligible.

Question #8 (from the chat box): The next question that is posted by Amy from Purdue University. Do all collaborator have to be qualified applicants or just the lead submitting the application?

Answered by Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: This is Erin Daly. The legislation is really specific on giving you sort of an advantage in a competitive way. Collaboration has to be between eligible applicants. Now, that is not to say that you could not submit an application and have a consortia, for instance sub grantees who do meet the definition of qualified entity. If you're looking for that competitive edge, the legislation is looking for only qualified applicants, collaborating at the prime level. Hopefully that answers that question.

Question #9 (from the chat box): The next item in the chat is from Vilma again from Michigan State. Would remote learning applications both for degree and non-degree seeking individuals qualify into the education component?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I'll start by taking a stab at this. The legislation talks about having it would include remote learning or distance type platforms. Again, how those would affect if those non degree seeking individuals or people that is affecting continuing education and something along those lines or specific training towards food safety or public health for people that already have degrees or a veterinary technologist. I believe the argument could be made. Again, as long as the, it's still linked with how this would help alleviate shortage situations within the United States. Anyone else have anything to add, I'll wait before I move on.

Question #10 (from the chat box): The next comment or question is from Rod Hall. Could the grant be used a mostly small animal practice in a shortage area to purchase or build some large animal facility to expand the practice to serve farmers and ranchers?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: This is Danielle. I'm going to go ahead and move to one of the slides that addresses what the equipment grant cannot be used upon and so in the sense to actually build a large animal facility, it would not be able to be funded based on the legislation. However, if there is something along the lines where they are looking to expand by having a mobile practice that would then fall under the part that is authorized under the legislation. So that expanding means having a mobile practice to bring a primarily small animal facility to have better ability to access large animals then yes, but no, in the sense if they're trying to do anything from new construction of a building or facility or to acquire, expand, remodel, alter an existing building or facility in order to accommodate large animals.

Question #11 (from the chat box): I believe I missed one earlier on so I apologize. From James MacLeod from University of Kentucky. Would you

please comment on the suitability of a proposal related to equine health, welfare and public health consideration?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: We'll give the same answer that we've given before, that one has to cast the proposal legitimately to their being a veterinary shortage mitigation and/or public health mitigation. The interesting thing about the equine sector is that there are cases. For instance, horses are important because of infectious disease transfer and there trans-boundary diseases that impact them that can impact human health as well as other livestock. Because the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program is built upon the idea that we're mitigating food supply veterinary shortages, one would not want to argue the equine grant proposal from the stand point of food because horses are not consumed in the United States as a major food source. However, there are public health considerations. There are animal health contagions that can spread in the agriculture community from horses to other animals and so forth and to the extent that one could, draft a proposal that would address that. I could see that as being a legitimate proposal. Maybe a little more challenging because it does not include the food animal component but it could be possible. Does anyone else have anything to add?

Okay, I'm going to take one more from the chat box before checking Shelly on the telephone line.

Question #12 (from the chat box): This one is from David Welch. Can education efforts be used to address business management needs or are they to be used for clinical and public health issues?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I'm going to attempt to take a stab at this, it's still not necessarily very clear by the legislation that we might have to read a little bit more clearly. If the argument could possibly be made that this, these still to be offered are for helping or in some way to mitigate the shortage situation, it may be possible. But I believe we're going to have to take a look, closer look at the legislation to see if the education part specifically is the clinical and public health issues. I do know that the education part must be used to help relieve shortage situations which I believe a business management type of platform, an argument could be reasonably made. Again, like I said, we're going to have to look further into that so I don't think we can give an exact answer on that now.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: It may be known by the, some of those on the phone that one of the challenges of making a practice work for you in these rural areas is, it can be hard to be professionally and successful and profitable and so forth, that's one of the reasons they weren't served before so being trained in unique business practices that can be used in these areas is actually a focus of areas, groups via AVMA and there are a few groups, the Academy of Veterinary Consultants and Academy of Rural Veterinarian who struggle with this and one could argue if a business model would be developed, that would be specifically addressing how to keep a business in the rural areas that were hard to maintain practice in before, that may work. In general, how to succeed as a veterinarian in any setting would probably not. It would have to be really focused, just strong argument made that

folks that go through this particular training are going to really have a boost in terms of developing, setting up practices and serving shortage situations.

Shelly. Do you have anyone on the phone line?

There are no questions in queue at this time. Just a reminder to our callers. If you would like to ask a question via phone, please enter yourself into the question queue by pressing pound, 2 on your telephone keypad.

Question #13 (from the chat box): The next item in the chat is from Dawn Cowhey from Chesapeake Feline Association. She's with a non-profit feline rescue in Maryland and they've been granted a spay/neuter pod and I'm assuming that is a mobile practice for performing spay/neuters. Can we use the educational grant to send our current veterinary tech for additional training and also recruit vets to provide services within the pod?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary. I think we may have to think about that question for a bit. My first response is there is so much dependence of this program on the, explicit definition of veterinary shortage situation in the VLMRP which is a food supply definition that I suspect, it would not. Now, we have to look very closely because there is the public health specification and of course there is toxoplasmosis mostly in pregnant women and things like that. There are public health considerations in relationship to cats but I believe overarching over this whole authority is this expectation that the shortages that are addressed are food supply veterinary shortages. Within that, there are public health issues but I don't think we can forego the first definition that is food supply veterinary medical shortages. I think we may have to think about that a little bit before giving a definitive answer. My first impression is probably not.

Question #14 (from the chat box): The next question is from Gary Vroegindewey from Lincoln Memorial University and then asking, if we're looking for stakeholder input on the ratio of equipment to education grant?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Yes, we would love stakeholder input on whether that's a proportion or dollar amount, stakeholders believe should be kind of divided between these two kind of different grants for a lack of a better description so please if you have any input or any comments on what you would propose, whether that's a percentage or an exact dollar amount, we do want that feedback.

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: This is Erin Daly, I would just add to that you can probably tell this program has some very broad goals in a bunch of different areas. It was authorized at 10 million dollars because folks thought that was the minimum it would take to accomplish some of those goals. While we're happy to have funding and excited to stand this up, with only 2.4 million being available I think the number one question that we are struggling with in terms of program design is how to best use the funds that we do have in 2016 to accomplish

some of these goals. I think we would all agree they're lofty and there are many of them so it's prioritizing and that prioritizing involves splitting the funds so we know we have different stakeholders and they may have different feelings on this. I think it's really important we have a dialogue that we get feedback specific to what would the appropriate amount be? If you were setting this program up at this dollar level what would a fair split of the funding be between the education and equipment goal?

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: Adding to that we would also be interested in what you think the lower end and the upper end of the grant amount might be appropriate for equipment versus education. At NIFA we have education grants and sometimes these are larger programs with lofty goals of educating a good number of people and those grants could be in the multiple \$100,000 range. Equipment can cost a lot but equipment sometimes doesn't cost so much and so there could easily be from your perspective a stakeholder's differences in what the low end and upper end of the equipment grant should be and what the low end and upper end of an education program development grant should be so we're very anxious to hear your thoughts on that. This would ultimately impact how many grants are awarded and how much impact those can have. So a larger grant can have larger impact but we also want to maximize to the extent possible the number of awardees so more can get done and a balance needs to be struck there. Please advise us.

Question #15 (from the chat box): The next question and I'm going to hope I get the acronym correct. I believe it's from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM). What is the funding period for the request for proposals and are these one year grants or can the education grants stand 2 or 3 years?

Answered by Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: This is Erin Daly. I can talk a little bit about that. I think the first part of this question ties to the second piece. We would normally do equipment grants as one year grants but I think we're open to making these longer in order to accommodate the service agreement piece. On the education side we are looking for your input on this but generally our education grants go 3 years or longer, 3 or 4 years, NIFA generally doesn't do grants longer than 4 years on the competitive grant sides so those are the limitations that we have but certainly we'd be happy to get feedback on that.

Question #16 (from the chat box): The next question is from Rod Hall. It seems that university and tribal groups who have grant writers on staff will have a huge advantage. Will the percentage of the funds be designated specifically to rural practitioners?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: We are planning to treat the education and the equipment separately. Recognizing the equipment grants are primarily for the for-profit, not for profit, individual private practitioners and education is probably more focused at government and universities where as you mentioned most grant writers have on staff. The answer to that question is not necessarily designated just for rural practitioners but the equipment portion is focused at

those rural practitioners and therefore will not be competing with people that are writing for education and I hope that answers that question.

Question #17 (from the chat box): Again James MacLeod from the University of Kentucky, with regard to a horse center proposal, please comment further in how essential relevance to the food supply, food safety, and food animal medicine?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: I will pick something that one could imagine where there'd be a connection. Foot and mouth disease which affects all hooved animals. Doesn't affect horses typically as badly as others but to the extent, and African Horse sickness, another similar disease, to the extent that there could be impacts across livestock agriculture at large, either economically or in other ways or with respect to one health issues for instance that one could make an argument. I'm not going to answer your question as explicitly as you would like but there are animals that are used for work purposes, draft horses, that are important to agricultural productions, and so with respect to rural needs and productivity of farms one could imagine a case could be made for working horses more easily perhaps more than pet horses but of course on the disease front, diseases do not care one way or the other what the horse is used for but depends on how you're casting the proposal. That's as far as I can go here, we might have to think about this a little bit further but we would like your input.

If you have some ideas about how horses can be argued as being relevant to food supply veterinary medicine and shortages of that service, capacity in the United States, present that to us. Feel free to call our National Program Staff, call me, and we can discuss it.

Question #18 (from the chat box): The next one is from David Welch from the American Association of Bovine Practitioners. Can non for profit professional organizations form alliances like organizations apply for education grants?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: As a qualified entity of a state national allied region veterinary organization of specialty board I believe you're talking those like organizations, there are under qualified applicants and if that means you would be collaborating across the ways in providing those types of things that then would also show that as designated in the legislation some level of competitive advantage. I will defer it to anyone else in the room if there's more they'd like to add to that point.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: I'd add just one thing and that is those boards have to be recognized by the AVMA to be eligible but I'm assuming yours is. The other boards you're looking at collaborating with, that'd be one of the stipulations.

Question #19 (from the chat box): The next question before I go back to the phone line is from Gary Vroegindewey again from Lincoln Memorial University. Will outcome metrics be required and/or considered?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Yes definitely and I may be a biased person here but my background is epidemiology so in program evaluation, so yes there will be some level which will be outlined in the RFA of what is the expectation, what do you hope to see in order for us to be able to state are you moving forward in reaching those goals whether it's education or equipment.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary Sherman, just with respect to outcomes, some of you may be aware that virtually all programs that are offered and administered through NIFA are very keen to have access to outcome impact data because we make an attempt to determine, at least every 5 years and sometimes more often on rolling basis that a program is achieving congressional intent and that the tax payer is getting bang for buck and this is something that will strength an application for sure, especially something like an education grant where you're educating people and those people are going on in their careers and how to identify and demonstrate that this educational program is actually having an impact on mitigating a shortage. It's challenging but there are folks who are specialized in training to do those follow ups so yes I think it would be very important to include that.

Shelly do we have anyone on the line?

Yes we have another question in queue. Caller your line is open, please go ahead.

Question #20 (from the phone): Hi, this is Jason Johnson and really enjoyed the conversations. I had a question, a point of clarification for the eligibility requirements and as I read those eligibility requirements, it basically says that each program or activities will substantially relieve veterinary shortages or support or facilitate public health activities so my specific question is if there was an education program that was developed, would that education program have to have a public health educational component, number one, or does the public health component as an eligibility only apply to the acquisition of practice and scope of practice and equipment in those areas?

Let's defer to Erin who is our legislative contact.

Answered by Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: You're challenging me today. I'm looking under eligibility in the legislation and certainly there are people who are serving in the pilot year of this program which is to be the veterinary shortage piece, we're leaving that. And that appears as a primary goal for all of the programs. There's the second piece that you referenced which is about supporting our facilitating private practices engaged in public health activities. That piece is not only served by the equipment grant. It seems to cross over into both areas of the program. By saying that I'm saying that while the veterinary shortage situation is important and I think it would be an important strength of any application, I can imagine based on the legislation that supporting our facilitating private vet practices engaged in public health activity could meet the bar for either side of the program potentially and again we have yet to develop the evaluation criteria so we have a certain amount of administrative flexibility left to the agency. One of the

reasons we're having these stakeholder sessions now is we want that feedback to play into the development of our evaluation criteria. To the extent you all feel that one of these goals is more important to be served by the small amount of money we have for this program, we would appreciate hearing from you all about that. Does that answer the question?

Yes, I believe so.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Thank you Jason and I would comment that those two items are connected by an "or" so at the basic level either one could be but we have lots of "ors" and some ands throughout this legislation. When it's or we have some option and discretion and keying off what Erin said, when it's an "or" and you only have a certain amount of money, you have to prioritize what you're going to fund. That's why we need your input with regards to one of these is more important than the other, let us know. We need to hear everybody's case on that.

Question #21 (from the phone): This is Jason Johnson. I had another question. As I think about empowering practitioners that wish to engage in food animal services in rural areas or as I consider veterinary students being in academia that has that as a goal for when they graduate, it's my assumption that the way that as I read through the regs that programs that educate either practitioners or students would qualify for the funding and the development of the educational projects and number two that exiting students headed into a rural area, two questions really, could potentially apply for both? VMLRP and equipment at the same time?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: There is nothing in the legislation that would prevent that. Those are considered two separate programs. I'll defer to Erin on anything else legislative lines.

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: Yeah I think each programs are designed to complement each other so not only is this not restricted but I think we'll be looking at ways to facilitate that sort of thing. I would however add that the Vet Medicine Loan Repayment Program has a service agreement attached to that. The equipment grants on this have a service agreement attached to them. We do not imagine that one service agreement would fulfill the other so if one were to progress through these various programs and receive loan repayment and grant funding, you could potentially rack up a little bit of service requirements to that area as you're doing that so again thoughts on how we might facilitate someone taking advantage both of that Vet Medicine Program and the Vet Services Program in being able to serve an area. If you have some thoughts on how we can best do that or things we need to avoid doing, we're happy to hear those. Thank you.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: Jason, this is Gary. Your first question about the two groups of students and their eligibility, yes to both, to both categories as you mentioned. With respect to the eligibility of someone where both programs apply, yes as was just said but it needs to be kept in mind that both of these will be competitive

programs and the majority of the applicants do not end up getting an award because we award the most competitive applications so if one is dependent on another, some people who apply to the VMLRP and if they don't get the award, they don't go to serve that area. What does that mean if they get the designated service grant program award and did not get the VMLRP award? If they're not going there to serve, they're not going to be able to accept that Veterinary Grant Services award so there's a little inter-connectedness here, someone will have to think hard about the consequences of what happens if they get one versus the other or maybe both. If they get both it's the brass-string I guess because you get to fill a shortage situation and you have the extra help which is what the Veterinary Grant Services Program is intended to do and get another leg up to someone who's willing to go try to make a goal in these practice areas that are challenging.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I also like to just speak to some things Gary is bringing up here and Erin with the interconnectedness of the Veterinary Services Grant Program and the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. As it pertains particular to terms of service and how best to balance these two programs and the consideration of not wanting either program to work against each other but rather to work with each other so we would appreciate feedback on those types of things. The other thing too when it comes to this is also what is reasonable term of service for these equipment grants. When we talk loan repayment we're doing three years. Again as they said, for typical equipment grants at NIFA they're usually one year. Again what are the minimum and maximum amounts we should be allowing people to apply for when they're applying for equipment grants or education but right now we're talking more along the lines of the equipment grants and what should that resulting term of service be? If NIFA typically does one year equipment grant and the terms of service is tied to the length of the grant then is a minimum of \$75,000 okay for one year of service or should it be longer and more comparable to the terms and length of service that we do for Vet Loan Repayment Programs that go up to \$75,000? Throwing it out there for input, we would really like to know what people think about minimums and maximums of these awards and the right amount of service that should be connected to receiving an award.

Shelly any more on the phone?

There are no further questions in queue.

Thank you. I want to move to the next one on the chat box.

Question #22 (from the chat box): Dr. Ernie Martinez asked would a proposal to provide education in veterinary services to under-serve equine in rural areas qualify. Funding may be used for supplies, travel, medicine, and doctor time. Would that be within the scope of this program?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I'd like to say it depends and most people hate that answer but part of the equipment grant means it has to be a shortage situation and in a rural area so if you're talking about under-served equine in a rural area you've got the first

part but the second part is looking at the shortage areas that are declared and has equine been identified as one of the species that either must be or maybe covered. Therefore it could be tied into that way but there may be other species also indicated on that shortage situation that would also have to be covered as far as the service go and so I will see if anyone else in the room has any more to add to that question.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This was a question regarding providing education in veterinary services. We might have to sort those out because the veterinary education side of this program, correct me if I'm wrong Erin, does not require absolute connection to a specific shortage area, it is more with large solving veterinary shortage situations in a different sense. Whereas the equipment grants are tied to a specific designated shortage situation as per the VMLRP so this is a combination between those two. It's probably something that should be discussed perhaps with me or Danielle at a later time over the phone or we could talk about how that might be crossed out or combined into one grant but Erin do you have anything to add to that?

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: I think we need to know more details about it. We did have some comments from our last listening session about potentially doing grants that serve both the education and the equipment side so I don't think we've ruled that idea out but you can see the complexity of this legislation. We're serving several different stakeholder groups with very different purposes so again we encourage comments that really think through some of the challenges of doing that and identify ways that we may be able to help you all if you can see there is a need for that kind of integration within the equipment and the education goals of the program.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Speaking to that, the part because I knot that is one of our key questions about the proportion of equipment grants that addresses education extension needs, that's linked to someone purchasing a mobile practice type situation, I'll try to go back to that slide so you can see the additional details related to that where it says establishing a mobile veterinary in which a portion will address education over extension so I think that's probably where that link would be and where those other items but again part of, if you're looking just at equipment you have to look at the shortage situations and see based on your question that focuses on equine, was equine listed as one of those species and would the person applying not only be serving equine but other species that are listed on that shortage distribution.

Question #23 (from the chat box): The next question is from Gary Vroegindewey at Lincoln Memorial. Is an entity limited to one proposal or partnership proposal?

Answered by Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: There's nothing in the legislation that would limit that. We would have the administrative flexibility to do that but at this point I don't see us limiting one entity to a single proposal especially based on the broad goals of the program.

Question #24 (from the chat box): The next question is from Kelly Larsen in Lincoln County Canvas. Would local economic development agencies that are not for profit and/or local government that is county who see veterinary recruitment as a critical economic development priority be considered a qualified applicant or partner?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Looking at the qualified applicants, definitely the counties, and the local government is outlined as one of the broad categories, a state local or tribal government agency. When looking at from a, again this would be under the education component, the for-profit not-for-profit entities are focused more on the equipment side, however if that for-profit or not-for-profit would fall under the state national allied or regional veterinary organization or specialty board then I believe they would then fall under the qualified applicant along the education.

Same if it's somehow related or connected to the state agricultural experimental station.

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: I would add to that, yes, they both look like a qualified entity depending upon how your non-profit is organized with your state agency. Who they answer to. They may be qualified for one side of the program versus another but they're qualified.

Question #25 (from the chat box): The next question is from Luise. What about using funds towards scholarships for students that commit to processing in these shortage situation?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: One of the things under education and I'll see if I can go back to that slide. Is related to establishing or expanding accredited veterinary education residency fellowship internship externship program or things related to continuing education. I believe if there's something that can be argued that it falls under these types of programs that is a possibility and we encourage people to provide comment on what these types of things they think should be included as we move forward for developing the types of education priorities. Again, if we go back to those key questions on education projects that we would like feedback on, where should our focus be in this first year. Again, with only limited funds and having to provide some for both education and equipment, should we be focusing on things like recruitment and continuing education or strengthening current pipelines things for current practitioners and technicians, etc. We would really like some feedback on this because this will help us develop the program further.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: The question you specifically alluded to, scholarships, and I was quick to notice scholarships was just not a word that was included in there. That does not mean however that is not permitted. One of the words when we get down to the other slide, works as fellowships. Fellowship is awfully close to scholarship and fellowship sometimes include funds to support those fellows and so we're going to probably require some OGC interpretation of

this as to whether scholarship is somehow meant to be included in this.
Erin?

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: I would add if you have some familiarity with NIFA's grant program we would be very careful not to duplicate the goals of some existing programs that do provide scholarship funds for this type of activity. The word scholarship was not in the legislation, that's not say it's completely unallowable but when we look at this as more of an expense rather than a goal we're going to need to get some more interpretation I think.

I'm going to turn it to Shelly before I go to the next couple of comments on the web. Do you have anyone on the line?

We do have a question in queue.

Okay thank you.

Caller your line is open, please go ahead.

Question #26 (from the phone): Gary, this is Keith Roehr. I also typed my question in. Given the number of questions and complexity of this program what is our role in external messaging? Is this something NIFA will manage? The external messaging, what role would State Animal Health Officials have in that regard?

Answered by Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: Generally our goal is to always ask for help with getting the word about all of our programs because in the end we want the best possible proposals and SAHO which you remember has always been very helpful with that sort of thing. I suspect we'll be asking for ... When our RFA is released, we will not just do it on our website but also let most of our major stakeholders know just as we did to attend this listening session and we would hope that word would be spread so the taxpayer can have the best possible grant proposal submitted and we can have the best outcome for with respect to congressional intent. Erin, anything more on that?

Additional input from Erin Daly, NIFA Policy Office: I would just add that if you didn't take note of it, I know you all play an important role in the nominations of shortage situations but there is also a piece of the many goals this program has. There is also a piece related to technical assistance on that and you all would not only be able to help us get the word out but to help us get feedback specific to that type of goal and where it should fall in the priority.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: This is Danielle, I believe as far as we move forward and getting ready to release that RFA or any announcement with the RFA, we'd be working at our communications here to try to whether to set the priorities or different things to help bring in that initial communication, to bring upfront because there are so many component when we go forward, let those emphasis or areas may be and we're looking for feedback from people to let us know where those emphasis should be. We would rather emphasize on areas based on your feedback rather than trying to figure out what makes

the most sense to us sitting here for a lack of a better description so the more feedback we can get from people showing they believe their institution, their association, them as an individual belief we should prioritize A B and C, the better it helps us to develop a program that would suit the best number of stakeholders involved.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: This is Gary, the national assembly is right at the center, they're a great partner in the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, couldn't do it without SAHO. Who help us you folks nominate the shortages and we review them and the vast majority are accepted and the expertise, and your expertise is critical to us really getting that definition right and the whole program is founded on getting it right what real shortages are. When it comes to ultimately spreading the word, yes, your help spreading the word to constituencies that can help, that can prepare quality proposals and send them in, we will very much appreciate that help.

Keith Roehr: So Gary, fact sheets or summation of information we could forward out would be appreciated. I think we have a lot of messaging tools that are specific to rural veterinarians and we'd be pleased to use those but again, we have more questions than we have answers and I think as you develop this request for proposal or if you got a different acronym for it, as that is developed, it can be put in a means that we can put out or host on websites, we'd be pleased to do that.

Gary Sherman: Thank you for that and that's exactly what we're planning on doing as you may know. This is our kind of listen. Then on the 29th, we go silent, we start writing that RFA, that's a closed process here at NIFA after we've gathered as much information as we can, during that whole process, yes a fact sheet, and FAQs are going to be developed and made more robust over time and we hope to have a very useful fact sheet at least and perhaps some other supporting items to share with those who are willing to use your messaging systems to help us get the word out so thanks again for all you do.

Very good.

Shelly, do we have anyone else in the queue?

There are no further questions in the queue at this time.

Question #27 (from the chat box): One more in the chat box at this time from Vilma Yuzbasiyan. What timeline do you anticipate for the RFA response deadline and duration of grant?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: I'm going to take us back to the slide of the beginning that's on an anticipated timeline, sorry to make anyone dizzy as we go through this. We anticipate getting that RFA out by the end of April. We're doing everything in our power to make that in April and not as late in April but that we will try to get it out in April. We're looking at things being due in the mid-June time frame, maybe early. Right now the earliest, the shortest response time would be 30 days however we are still in discussions in having to look at timely requirements to get money out the door by September 15th of 45 or

even if possible, 60 days. Those panels will need to meet and they will need to have reviewers in that late July or early August time period to meet the September 15th deadline. So as people start to backward plans on this and realizing what we have to ask our reviewers in trying to balance their versus having enough open time for people to apply, we definitely have to balance that appropriately. As far as the duration of the grant, I believe Erin answered this earlier and spoke to. Again, we would like feedback on this type of thing. Traditionally our education grants are up to in that 3-4 year time period, equipment traditionally have been 1 year here at NIFA but they don't typically have the same type of written terms of service linked to it so that's what where we're really needed a lot of people's feedback from the equipment side is what's the appropriate duration of those grants as the length of the grant will be tied to the terms of service.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: The timeline you're looking at right now is tentative but it can't be too far off either if we're going to get this money spent because unlike the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program which allows for unspent monies to get carried forward into the next year, that just didn't happen with the appropriations processes this time. This is one year money meaning it goes back to the treasury if not expended by the end of the federal fiscal year and it's not, which of course is September 30th but there's a lot of things that have to happen to get monies probably distributed through an agency like ours following all policies and procedures so that is why our last date isn't September 30th because we have things that have to be done beforehand. This is pretty close to what's going to have to be unless something were to change and I can't believe anyone is going to be able to change this to something other than 1 year money so this is the track we're on and if you check in to our website, as things turn up for us, like when the panels are going to be and that sort of thing, we're going to try to flesh out this timeline and it'll become ever more accurate. Bottom line is we would like to have this 2.4 million dollar out the door by the end of September and if we don't some of that will be lost and that's certainly something we're not wanting to allow to happen.

Additional input from Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: And Vilma, I believe your second question about 2.5 for one year, it is correct. These funds have an expiration date at the end of the fiscal year so that's all we have available for this year and it must be appropriated, must be obligated by September 15th date.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: We cannot answer the question whether there will be funds next year. Every year is new with the federal government, this is a new program, we do not know whether this will be once and that's it or whether it's like the VMLRP is going to be something that is supported by both houses in Congress and the White House. Maybe continues flat or it can continue in grow, we cannot know that until congress passes the budget each year so we have the 2.5 million, that's what we're focusing on right now.

Shelly, do we have anyone on the line?

We do have a question in queue.

If you can please open that line.

Sure thing, caller your line is open, please go ahead.

Question #28 (from the phone): This is Jason Johnson, one of the biggest questions going into this listening session to me was what percentage of education versus equipment. I don't have an answer for that but I have another question. My question is Dr. Sherman, Danielle, and everyone else around the table, as we think about the tight timeline to get this money spent in ways in which to allocate that money for education versus equipment. Does your agency have experience on the human medical field? They offer similar programs that fund equipment, what is the perception of those programs versus funding education based programs for rural areas and what do you think in your opinion would position us the best as we're evaluated and your agency's evaluated to continue to gain funding, knowing we have a tight timeline here?

Answered by Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: This is Danielle. I have an inquiry out to the Health Resources and Services Administration who runs the National Health Services Core that have the "rural doctors program" where they provide loan repayment to those doctors working. The National Health Services Core has no equivalent when it comes to equipment being tied to service. However they're checking with an agency at a higher level and I just sent this question to her last week so I'll try and follow up. But she's not aware of anything on their end at least of having a human equivalent on the equipment side. Haven't necessarily looked to the education, I'm not aware of legislation, I'm not up to date on what the human health legislation looks like that combines education and equipment within the same legislation with similar outcomes or similar goals. We are reaching out and we're open if anyone knows of something to let us know where that might be and we can reach out to the contacts there.

Additional input from Gary Sherman, NIFA NPL: The National Health Services Core Program is multi-faceted. It has several programs that includes not just post graduate placement of doctors in rural areas but does have scholarship fellowship programs, training programs, so there probably is a greater history with respect to the education program side and Danielle is following up on the equipment side and veterinarians need equipment, whereas doctors oftentimes can have office space but then they align themselves with the hospital so the equipment may not be as big a deal on the human side but it's a very good thing you bring up and we'll explore that and if there's a pathway we can follow, a wheel that has already been invented, that would help us out, we would certainly consider it.

We have a few more minutes left. I wanted to address something that looks like I need to clarify a comment I made. When I said obligated it means that the award money on the federal side has to be spent. It has to be said that we have designated this money to go to an entity. As far for that entity, that recipient, how long they have to spend it, that's going to be based on the length of the grant and so we're looking for feedback on the length of those. Traditionally, education in the 3-4 year length

of time, equipment, traditionally here at NIFA has been 1 year but with the terms of service and having to be linked to both the grant length, the need to probably have to make that longer, we're looking for feedback on that. There's one more question on the chat but I want to check with Shelly to see if there's anyone else on the line.

We do plan to close down at 2:30 and so I'm sorry Shelly for interrupting, I want to give everyone a heads up, we do have 3 minutes left.

No worries, there's no further questions in queue.

Danielle Tack, NIFA Program Coordinator: Anyone that we do miss or those that have additional comments, we are accepting those through February 29th and we encourage you to go to vsgp@nifa.usda.gov submit those. Anything that we do not get addressed is in a chat box. It has been read and it's been collected so if you have any last minute things you have to throw out there that's fine. The last comment I have is from Gary Stone and he's providing some feedback for the equipment grant service requirements and it should be in his opinion associated with the life of the equipment as major typical schedule, a minimum of 1 year approach, 75% of the life of the equipment as measured by the depreciation. Thank you for that comment and we will take that into consideration as we define this program. We're on our last minute. I'm going to go back to the comments and questions where information can be found. If everyone has that handy as it's coming to an end, again please send us your feedback particularly on those key questions and any other priorities or anything else you think we should take into consideration as we move forward.

It would help us if you would use the Veterinary Services Grant Program email, vsgp@nifa.usda.gov as opposed to emailing us individually. We will all see it but it's good that it goes into the central box and can be distributed to the appropriate experts here so thank you for doing that. One more minute.

Shelly is there anyone else on the line?

There are no further questions in queue.

It looks like we've reached the 2:30 mark. Again as I said go to our website and the email address and we thank you for all your time, questions, and comments.

Thank you, everybody.