

Veterinarian Shortage Situation Nomination Form

To be submitted under the authority of the chief State or Insular Area Animal Health Official

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)

This form must be used for Nomination of Veterinarian Shortage Situations to the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), Authorized Under the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA)

Note: Please submit one separate nomination form for each shortage situation. See the State Animal Health Official (SAHO) section of the VMLRP web site (www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp) for the number of nominations permitted for your state or insular area.

Location of Veterinary Shortage Area for this Nomination

Location of Veterinary Shortage: Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska
(e.g., County, State/Insular Area; must be a logistically feasible veterinary practice service area)

Approximate Center of Shortage Area (or Location of Position if Type III): Palmer or Wasilla
(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

Overall Priority of Shortage: High Priority

Type of Veterinary Practice Area/Discipline/Specialty (select one) :

Type II: Private Practice - Rural Area, Food Animal Medicine (awardee obligation: at least 30% FTE or 12hr/week)

For Type I or II Private Practice:

Must cover(check at least one)

- Beef Cattle
- Dairy Cattle
- Swine
- Poultry
- Small Ruminant
- Other: _____

May cover

- Beef Cattle
- Dairy Cattle
- Swine
- Poultry
- Small Ruminant
- Other: elk, reindeer, bison, yak

For Type III Public Practice:

Employer: _____ Position Title: _____

Please select **one or more** specialty/disciplinary areas:

- Food Safety
- Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Other: _____

(Optional) If the nominator wishes to specify a service time for this shortage situation that is higher than the minimum required for the shortage type checked above, please specify the percent time in the box below (based on a 40-hour work week). Leave the box blank if the service time for this shortage situation is for the minimum percent time of the shortage type indicated.

%

Please describe the **importance and objectives** of a veterinarian filling this shortage situation as well as being located in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 1500 characters).

The objectives of this position will be to develop herd health management to an expanding number of beef cattle and small ruminant operations as well as 4-H groups in the Matanuska-Susitna borough, which covers 25,260 square miles and supports a population of over 82,515. This is the largest concentration of food animal producers (NASS) in the State: 41 cattle operations, 19 hog producers, 49 poultry facilities (not including the multiple number of private back yard poultry flocks (backyard flocks to small commercial operations 800 – 1500 birds) , 2 musk-ox farms, 3 reindeer farms, 18 dairy goat, goat, sheep operations, 4 elk and 6 bison producers. One commercial Grade A dairy farm resides in the area and one producer is developing a feed lot operation with a production of 5 to 8,000 beef cattle and 200 bison.

This position could also support emergency response to morbidity/mortality investigations and emergency response that would impact livestock operations and animal health. In the past producers in this area have had to respond to both earthquakes and wild fires. There are currently 2 veterinarians providing service to this entire area; due to the distance between farms veterinary coverage is severely lacking while the expansion of farms and livestock numbers increase. The expansion of local farm markets in this area also would require the veterinarian to focus on bio-security and "One Health" issues, such as, wildlife interactions and food safety concerns.

Please describe the **activities** of a veterinarian meeting this shortage situation in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 1500 characters or less).

This position would provide herd health support to the livestock and poultry producers and 4-H groups in this large area from operations in rural areas around Palmer and Wasilla could possibly extend to consultations to remote locations north to Willow and northeast to Glennallen. There is a single Grade A cow dairy and several cow and small ruminant dairies within this area that provide dairy products through "cow or goat share" businesses. In the Glennallen area, there are a number of livestock operations: a swine operation (imports ~ 4,000 feeder pigs/year) and is expanding a beef herd and reindeer herd; yak farmer and several beef cattle farms. There is no veterinary support within 100 miles so a practitioner could use routine herd health visits/consultations, in addition to, telemedicine medicine to support these farms.

There has been an increase in the number of homestead farms contributing meat, dairy and vegetable products to local farm markets, and schools; service to these homestead farms could be a significant part of the services offered. In addition, several hog producers have expanded their herds (400 to 1,000 feeders) to meet the local demand for pork products mostly through farm gate sales. Livestock operations use horses and herding dogs to work the livestock herds so it would be essential to support with equine and small animal/pet services. The position would need to focus on herd health, Biosecurity, public health and food safety issues.

Please describe any past efforts to recruit and retain a veterinarian in the shortage situation identified above (limit your response to 750 characters or less).

No previous efforts to recruit veterinary services have been made from this office other than the position nomination through this program. Over the last 10 years clinics offering farm animals services have decreased, now only 2 exist since a recent retirement of a practitioner. Livestock producers and the Division of Agriculture have actively petitioned this office to provide support to the food animal producers. The University of Fairbanks has developed a 2 +2 Veterinary Program with Colorado State and has hired a livestock extension veterinarian that will provide some support this position in serving the livestock producers. Two veterinary clinics serving this region are recruiting an associate to handle livestock calls.

Please describe the risk of this veterinarian position not being secured or retained. Include the risk(s) to the production of a safe and wholesome food supply and to animal, human, and environmental health not only in the community but in the region, state/insular area, nation, and/or international community (limit your response to 2000 characters or less).

The risk involved with not filling this position could be significant for the survival of the dairy industry in the area. The closure of the Matanuska Creamery several years ago and lack of veterinary services has resulted in the failure of three dairy farms; the remaining local creamery is planning to expand to meet the need for locally produced dairy products. So there is the potential to expand the market for milk production and there are numerous agricultural parcels open in the area and the Division of Agriculture is attempting to attract new dairies. Due to the relative separation of the population of the state to agricultural products, the state continues to focus on food security issues supporting the development of local farm markets and farm to school markets to stimulate agricultural growth and expansion of livestock production.

Warming temperatures in the state has increased the introduction of invasive species (insect vectors, parasites) as well as an increase in certain animal and food borne diseases. The impact on animal health has been noticeable. This area of the state has the largest concentration of people and livestock operations and without support from veterinary practitioners in the field the state and agricultural industry will be ill prepared to identify and diagnose morbidity and mortality events that impact both animal (wild and domestic) and public health. In addition, without this position the state may not be able to effectively manage emergency response to a hazard that impacts domestic animals and animal health.

SAHO nominator must check both boxes below in order for NIFA to consider this nomination for official designation

- By checking this box, I affirm that this form represents a nomination and is subject to NIFA review and approval.
- By checking this box, I affirm that it is my professional opinion that this is a bona fide food supply or public health-related veterinary shortage situation. I affirm due diligence has been invested to identify this area as a shortage situation of at least moderate priority (severity).

Authorized State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or designee:

Name: Robert F Gerlach

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Public reporting for OMB control number 0524-0046 is estimated to average two hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information, unless it displays a current valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to NIFA, OGF, 800 9th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.