

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 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: State of Delaware (our State is 100 miles x 40 miles, which means that all travel from Dover is logistically possible for applicant)
Approximate Center of Shortage Area (or Location of Position if Type III): State capitol (Dover, DE 19901)

Overall Priority of Shortage: Moderate Priority x High Priority Critical Priority

Type of Veterinary Practice Area/Discipline/Specialty (Choose only one Type)

Type I Shortage: Private Practice Food Animal Medicine (awardee obligation: at least 80 percent time or 32 hr/week)

- 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

Type II Shortage: Private Practice - Rural Area Food Animal Medicine (awardee obligation: at least 30 percent time or 12 hr/week)

- 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

Type III Shortage: Public Practice (awardee obligation: at least 49 percent time or 19.6 hr/week)

Employer: State of Delaware Position Title: Public Health Veterinarian

Please select one or more specialty/disciplinary areas:

- Food Safety
Public Health
Epidemiology
Other

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 200 words or less).

The State of Delaware has a severe shortage of veterinarians in public practice. We no longer have a Public Health Veterinarian, and there is no wildlife veterinarian. Aside from the State Animal Health Official (SAHO), there is one other State veterinarian in Delaware (the Deputy SAHO). Because our entire state has just 2.0 food animal veterinarians in practice, we are often called upon to respond to outbreaks of disease in food animals, or to perform routine necropsies because nobody else in the state is available to get it done within a realistic time frame. This drastically detracts from the amount of time we are able to devote to public health issues and important regulatory responsibilities. The veterinarian must commit at least **49 %** time towards public practice to satisfactorily fill the nominated situation. The objectives (described in this section) of a veterinarian meeting this shortage situation would be required to perform most of the duties described in this document.

The incumbent would spend time educating citizens who have a very limited understanding of animal agriculture. Nearly every complaint regarding animals comes through our office (SAHO), because as veterinarians we are considered subject matter experts in everything from backyard chickens to rabid wildlife, to reasons for die-offs in Canada geese. In general, we are in need of someone on the State side who can speak for agriculture but also help to fill the gaps with regard to public health issues (zoonoses), wildlife issues (die-offs of avian species; interface between wildlife and domestic animals), and supporting the animal producers of the state by improving regulations and fighting for continued funding and devotion of resources to the agricultural community. Given the wide range of regulatory activities and demands placed upon the existing workforce, we have no doubt that there is a great need for an additional public service veterinarian in our State.

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 200 words or less).

Duties of this person could be within the Department of Agriculture (livestock and poultry health, animal emergency management), Department of Public Health, or with the Department of Natural Resources (fish and wildlife disease surveillance and management). Ideally, one position could distribute their efforts as needed to all three agencies. The specific priorities of the selected veterinarian would be determined by the agency employing the veterinarian and the position title of the veterinarian. Employment might be based in the Dover area (state Capitol).

The state-employed veterinarian who fills this shortage situation would be involved with a great variety of issues, as described in the preceding section. Although the greatest deficit lies on the agricultural side, because the SAHO and Deputy SAHO are called upon to act as public health veterinarians, this position could reside within the Division of Public Health. With the decrease in the overall percentage of folks involved in agriculture, it is becoming more common that veterinarians are called in as experts on cases of suspected cruelty in any species.

Please describe any past efforts to recruit and retain a veterinarian in the shortage situation identified above (limit your response to 100 words or less).

The veterinarians who accepted regulatory positions during 2004 to 2009 were unlikely to be retained mainly due to the relatively low salary in comparison to their level of debt in some cases. The salaries of regulatory veterinarians in state government are often lower than those offered by industry or in private practice. Between 2004 and 2009, four veterinarians voluntarily left the Delaware Department of Agriculture for reasons other than retirement. It is our belief that offering a loan repayment plan would greatly increase the retention of a public service veterinarian in Delaware.

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 250 words or less).

The areas being impacted by the shortage in public service veterinarians are: public health (zoonotic disease) programs, livestock and poultry regulatory programs, interaction/cooperation and coordination with wildlife biologists in our natural resources agency, and emergency response coordination efforts. Because the two regulatory veterinarians (SAHOs) are constantly occupied with responding to disease reports and other investigations, or responding to complaints or concerns of both internal and external customers, there is a serious risk that a public health issue will go unnoticed.

Twenty public health-related investigations or projects were performed between 4/1/13 and 12/31/13 by the SAHO or her staff. Each investigation may incur up to 2 full days of work for 1 or 2 members of the SAHO's staff.

Another gap is the weak relationship that exists between wildlife experts in Delaware and the SAHO's office. We only get on the phone together if there's a crisis at hand, such as a wildlife die-off. There simply isn't enough time to get together for regular meetings to discuss ways we could assist each other by sharing data and collaborating on disease issues. A great example would be to work together on examining the interaction between wild waterfowl, for example, and our commercial poultry houses or backyard poultry flocks. Chronic Wasting Disease is another issue that could be elaborated upon if there was another veterinarian available to spend time with natural resources personnel.

(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 on Page 1, 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.

49 %

Minimum Service time required for each shortage type

Type I: 80 percent time or 32 hours/week

Type II: 30 percent time or 12 hours/week

Type III: 49 percent time or 19.6 hours/week

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: Heather L. Hirst

Title: State Animal Health Official for Delaware

Organization: Delaware Department of Agriculture

Email: heather.hirst@state.de.us

Telephone Number: 302-698-4560
(Area code required)

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.

Form NIFA 2009-0001
OMB Information Collection Approval No. 0524-0046
Expiration Date: 8/31/2013