

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: Golden Valley, Meagher, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Wheatland Counties
(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): Big Timber
(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: _____

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.

40

 %

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).

This region of Montana meets the criteria for Frontier designation, with a population density of 2.1 people per square mile. There is a twelve to one ratio of livestock to people covering 8,640 square miles. There are currently 19 USDA Level II accredited veterinarians on record in this region. Of these, four have careers that are in excess of 35 years, 1 has expressed an interest in retirement, and 3 do minimal livestock work. This effectively leaves 11 veterinarians to cover over 215,000 head of livestock. This area also has an additional 12,000 swine and 60,000 poultry.

Our program objective is to facilitate access to the full spectrum of veterinary medical services, and provide regional coverage for State/National surveillance and reporting programs in the region, by increasing the number of rural practice veterinarians. Meeting this objective will improve food safety; animal and public health; and will help the Nation maintain a resiliency to outbreaks of foreign animal and zoonotic diseases.

A supported veterinarian will meet several critical objectives: 1) access to animal health services for livestock and companion animals in the community; 2) early detection of foreign animal and zoonotic diseases affecting livestock and small animals; 3) seamless integration of animal and human health awareness and response throughout the community; and 4) effective local and regional disease surveillance and reporting to support State and National disease monitoring efforts.

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).

The practicing veterinarian will provide comprehensive veterinary medicine, surgery and dentistry in a rural setting for large and small animals. Specifically, they will perform routine and emergency veterinary services to include: preventive health activities including examinations of animals, vaccine consulting and administration; herd health services; obstetrical services; and emergency services including calving, injuries, or suspected severe disease. Animal and human health will be preserved by providing active and passive surveillance for emerging, zoonotic and foreign animal diseases. The veterinarian will maintain communication with State animal health officials to report disease outbreaks or unusual animal health conditions and stay abreast of developing issues. They will fulfill a critical public health role in these medically underserved communities through familiarity with the community, knowledge of the region's animal health status, and communication and coordination with local and state public health authorities on incidents of zoonotic disease and public health emergencies. The veterinarian will support state, national and international animal health as a Deputized State veterinarian and USDA-accredited veterinarian regulating intrastate, interstate, and international movement of livestock. They may further contribute to food safety through providing professional services to state-licensed slaughter plants, feedlots, and livestock markets.

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).

These counties were previously included in unfilled shortage designations in some capacity since 2014. There is concern about recruitment and retention of veterinarians due to the rural location and lack of services. As more veterinarians reach retirement age, there is concern about veterinary coverage for the many livestock operations in the area. Locally, practices support student externships and university mentorship programs, and have advertised for veterinarians in national periodicals.

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).

Three factors contribute to the veterinary shortage for this region: established practitioners approaching retirement, a paucity of new veterinarians moving in, and the recent death of a food animal veterinarian in the area. The region is characterized by 277,717 food animals spread over 8,640 acres, feedlots, colonies, and slaughter plants.

An unmitigated shortage situation will negatively impact efficient animal production and animal and human health; and create additional risk to food safety and national and international biosecurity. Continued or worsened shortages will create inability to provide veterinary services for herd health, animal health, and veterinary preventive medicine. Compliance with animal health regulations, specifically those regulating the movement of livestock species across state lines, may suffer. The loss of professional reproductive and nutritional services will result in decreased herd performance, a disastrous condition for already marginal beef production operations. The ensuing gap in state and national health surveillance precludes the early detection of domestic and foreign animal disease outbreaks, setting the stage for wide dissemination of disease prior to detection. With the recent emergence of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, ensuring adequate veterinary coverage in an area with large swine and poultry operations is of increasing importance. The proximity to an international border with robust import and export activity raises the likelihood of international as well as interstate spread, and creates a greater risk of undetected imported disease. Disease control programs from trichomoniasis to brucellosis, rabies and tuberculosis will suffer without adequate veterinary capacity. The majority of communities in the region lack health professionals, creating great risk for undetected incursions of zoonotic disease.

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: Marty Zaluski, DVM

Title: Montana State Veterinarian

Organization: Montana Department of Livestock

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(Area code required)

Public reporting for OMB control number 0524-0050 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.