

# 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](http://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: Dawson County in Nebraska  
(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): Lexington, Nebraska 68850  
(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

Overall Priority of Shortage:  Moderate Priority  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: Equine

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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 objectives of the veterinarian filling the shortage situation are to assist in maintaining and improving overall animal welfare; maintaining the health of animals that contribute to an abundant, wholesome food supply; and maintaining and improving the veterinarian to food animal ratio. Further objectives include fulfilling the obligations of regulatory medicine for state and federal governments. The state hopes to mitigate vulnerability to emerging animal diseases by maintaining an appropriate veterinarian to animal ratio.

The county, which covers approximately 1,000 square miles, supports about 239,000 head of cattle, 53,000 swine and 1,200 horses according to 2012 Census figures. In addition, with a large livestock market, feedlots and a processor, located within the county, the local economy is largely dependent on the welfare of food-animals produced in the region.

Based on anecdotal evidence collected from individuals familiar with livestock production in the area, eight of the veterinarians currently listed in the State of Nebraska licensure records have either retired, left the area, or do not have an active private practice in the county. Of the 13 remaining licensed veterinarians in the county, two are near retirement and seven practice on opposite ends of the county, leaving four who practice in the central area of the county.

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).

With the local economy highly dependent on the success of the livestock industry, it is imperative that the veterinarian be able to provide services necessary to maintain and nurture the overall health of food animals (primarily cattle and calves) in the immediate geographic area. These services include emergency health care, disease monitoring and treatment, and assistance during the calving season.

The county also is home to one of the largest livestock auction markets in the region which requires the constant vigilance and service of a qualified veterinarian. These services include examination of consigned animals for disease surveillance, perform required animal testing protocol and implement individual animal testing protocol.

The veterinarian also would be expected to become proficient in regulatory medicine in order to assist state and federal officials in protecting against domestic and foreign contagious animal diseases.

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).

In the past couple of years, two new veterinarians were recruited to the area and given positions that included food animal care. However, due to social, geographic and economic challenges both have recently moved despite efforts to retain them. One area veterinarian with health issues has been actively trying to sell his practice the past few years and another veterinarian is close to retirement and hopes to sell his practice as well. Both doctors feel that having the VMLRP available will provide necessary economic incentive for new veterinarians to practice and remain in the area.

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).

Dawson County is in the heart of cattle country in Nebraska (a leading cattle producing state) with over 239,000 head. The adjoining counties of Gosper and Custer support over 318,000 additional head of cattle. The three counties together stretch over 4,000 square miles. Therefore it is critical to keep an adequate veterinarian to food animal ratio in order to assure the region is not underserved.

By not securing and maintaining new veterinarians in Dawson County, it puts the overall health and welfare of the large livestock herds in the immediate area at risk, and stretch the limited number of vets in the adjoining counties to travel excessive distances in order to serve the needs of producers in the entire region. This type of situation could result in deteriorating standards of animal health in the area, delays in recognition of pathogenic diseases that spread quickly and adequate response time to calving complications.

It also is critical to provide the local livestock auction market with the appropriate veterinarian services to maintain a healthy environment for the thousands of food animals that are bought and sold through the facility.

(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.

**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

**X** By checking this box, I affirm that this form represents a nomination and is subject to NIFA review and approval.

**X** 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: Dr. Dennis Hughes

Title: State Veterinarian

Organization: Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Email: [dennis.hughes@nebraska.gov](mailto:dennis.hughes@nebraska.gov)

Telephone Number: (402) 471-2351 or 800-572-2347  
(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  
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