

# 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: Webb, Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, TX  
(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): Los Fresnos Incident Command Post, 105 W Ocean Blvd., Los Fresnos, TX 78566  
(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

Overall Priority of Shortage: Critical Priority

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

Type III: Public Practice (awardee obligation at least 49% FTE or 19 hr/week)

#### For Type I or II Private Practice:

- |                                         |                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Must cover</b> (check at least one)  | <b>May cover</b>                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle    | <input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swine          | <input type="checkbox"/> Swine          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry        | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |

#### For Type III Public Practice:

Employer: Texas Animal Health Commission Position Title: Field Veterinarian

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

- Food Safety
- Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Other: Regulatory Veterinary Practice

(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.

90 %

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 Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Field Veterinarian will serve as the front-line defense for incursion of foreign and emerging animal diseases and pests. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture and 2008 AVMA Statistics, this six-county area has over 210,000 food animals including cattle, goats, sheep and lambs as well as a rather large equine population. Parts of this six-county area also have a large population of farmed cervid species. This six-county area spans over 9,000 square miles, 8,500 of which have an international border with Mexico. This position serves to support efforts to safeguard the health and marketability of domestic livestock by overseeing and participating in disease eradication programs, livestock importation procedures, foreign animal disease investigations, and management of lay technicians tasked with carrying out livestock disease control and eradication programs. This veterinarian will act as a local resource for livestock producers and local veterinary practitioners and will act as the public liaison with industry groups. In addition to animal disease emergencies, this veterinarian will take an active role in natural disaster emergency preparedness and response as it relates to animal issues. This position is based out of the southeastern most aspect of the six-county area, so travel will be required to sufficiently serve the entire area.

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 TAHC Field Veterinarian activities will include: supporting efforts to eradicate foreign pests such as cattle fever ticks found on cattle, wildlife (white-tailed deer and nilgai), and horses; supporting efforts to eradicate foreign animal diseases such as Equine Piroplasmiasis; working to protect the health of the domestic cattle herd by working to improve animal disease traceability, especially related to imported Mexican origin cattle. The TAHC Field Veterinarian will participate in employee development activities and training for succession planning within the Agency. Additional essential job functions will include: serving as a point of contact with herd owners, designing herd plans and assigning appropriate herd follow-up tasks to supporting inspectors; applying epidemiological principles to complete investigations; assist with the education of veterinary and undergraduate students through guest lectures and supervising interns, when needed; and coordinating, overseeing and providing input on the performance evaluations of supporting inspectors.

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).

The Texas Animal Health Commission has had a difficult time trying to find qualified veterinarians to fill the vacant Field Veterinarian position. This position has been posted twice, each time on the Texas Animal Health Commission website, with cross posting on social media outlets. Both times the position has been posted it has also been posted on the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Bulletin Board Job Postings. The first time the position was posted it was listed from 08/10/2015-10/05/2015 with no successful applicants. This position was posted again on November 30, 2015. It has remained open since that date and as of February 09, 2016 there have been no applicants.

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).

This six-county area is currently critically under served from a regulatory veterinary perspective after nearly 12 months of attempts to recruit a veterinarian for this position. Currently, this south Texas border region has one supervising veterinarian serving with time divided between south Texas and the Texas Animal Health Commission central office in Austin. The Field Veterinarian position has been maintained for more than 12 months by deploying other TAHC veterinarians to Los Fresnos to serve for 7-14 day rotations. The result of this rotational schedule has been to leave the deployed veterinarians permanent assignment unattended during that deployment. Though not ideal, this deployment rotation has been necessary to fill this role pending recruitment of a full time Field Veterinarian whose duty station will be at the Incident Command Post in Los Fresnos, Cameron County. This deployment rotation is also not sustainable for the long term. The TAHC Field Veterinarian position is critical for the protection of the health and subsequent marketability of domestic livestock on local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Regulatory veterinarians, working closely with local Accredited veterinarians are the first line of detection and defense against foreign and emerging animal disease and pest incursions. Early detection of disease that has been introduced to the area will limit the impact on all levels of livestock marketability.

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: Andy Schwartz, DVM (point of contact Susan Culp, DVM)

Title: Interim Executive Director

Organization: Texas Animal Health Commission

Email: comments@tahc.texas.gov (susan.culp@tahc.texas.gov)

Telephone Number: 800-550-8242 x716  
(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 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.