

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: Armstrong, Texas
(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): Highway 287 W, Claude, TX 79019
(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: Equine

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.

%

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 main objective of a veterinarian filling this shortage area is to provide sound medical, surgical and emergency services for cattle and other livestock without requiring the producers or veterinarians to travel long distances. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture and 2008 AVMA Statistics, Armstrong County has a total of 32,911 food animals and one food animal veterinarian. The practice located in Armstrong County opened in 1963 and has supported two veterinarians since 1986. The original practice owner recently retired leaving the current owner with a heavier than normal work load. This heavier workload often results in the office being closed for services to the local community when the practitioner is called away for ranch calls. Over the past 53 years, this practice has provided services within a roughly 100 mile radius of Armstrong County and established numerous clients, from small producers with just a few head of cattle to large scale ranches with upwards of 3,000 head of cattle. While the practice is located in Armstrong County, the hospital provides veterinary services for clients in Carson, Gray, Donley, Briscoe, Randall, Potter, Moore, Swisher, Oldham, and Hemphill Counties. A new veterinarian recently obtained employment with the practice and is interested in purchasing the practice when the current owner retires, however, the new graduate must be financially secure enough to pay back substantial student loan debt prior to considering tenure.

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 practice concentrates mainly on beef cow-calf operations; however, a veterinarian in this area must have an especially diverse skill set. They are responsible for not only livestock medicine, surgery, herd health practices and prevention of disease, but also to help producers attain maximum profitability from their livestock. Veterinarians in this area must also provide quality equine and companion animal services for the local community. The practice sees a fair amount of swine, small ruminant and show steer work to support youth showing in local stock shows. A rural veterinarian must also possess stamina and patience. A typical fall day at this practice may involve palpating anywhere from 300-500 head of cows during the day only to return to the clinic to see appointments all afternoon and still be able to provide emergency services overnight, if necessary. The veterinarian at this practice also plays a crucial role in state and federal disease surveillance as well as livestock traceability, particularly in cattle heading to nearby Oklahoma or New Mexico.

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).

Rural practices typically find it more difficult to attract and retain veterinarians with competitive salaries that can meet the substantial student loan debt faced by recent graduates. Several large animal practitioners in the area surrounding Armstrong County have opted to close their clinics after years of unsuccessful attempts to recruit an associate. Local support for the designation of this area as a VMLRP shortage comes from the manager of a 100,000 acre cow/calf operation in Panhandle, TX, the manager of a 200,000 acre cow/calf operation in Amarillo, TX, the manager of a 70,000 acre cow/calf operation in Amarillo, TX as well as from an Amarillo businessman/owner of a multi-county cow/calf operation.

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).

If another veterinarian is not retained, the workload will be unmanageable for the current practice owner. This area has dependably supported two veterinarians for over 30 years. The newly recruited recent graduate veterinarian has been widely accepted by the clients and she understands the diversity of rural practice. While interested in purchasing the practice when the current owner retires, without additional financial support, it is possible that she may have to leave rural practice for higher compensation offered in more urban areas. Within the last 8-10 years, at least three clinics within surrounding rural counties have closed due to retirement and inability to recruit and hire an associate veterinarian. The closing of the practice in Armstrong County would be detrimental to the community as well as to the food animal producers who have been clients for 53 years. The inability to retain an associate veterinarian would force producers in the area to travel 30-60 miles for veterinary care or pay higher costs for a veterinarian to perform a ranch call. The outcome of that may decrease compliance with state and federal regulatory testing and inspection. From a regulatory standpoint, large animal veterinarians are responsible for recognizing such zoonotic health risks as anthrax, rabies and West Nile virus; economically devastating diseases like foot and mouth disease, Texas cattle fever, Chronic Wasting Disease and others. Loss of a widely accepted associate, or worse, the sole practice serving this area, could make the potential damage of a foreign or emerging animal disease outbreak even more devastating.

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 9th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.