

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: Uvalde, Maverick, Zavala, Dimmit, LaSalle , 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): Intersection of US Hwy 83 and US Hwy 57 between Uvalde and Crystal City, TX
(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 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: cervids/deer, 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).

Veterinarians are our state and nation's first line of defense against foreign animal diseases. This is especially important along an international border such as the one included in this shortage area. This shortage area contains very few veterinarians who provide care to food animals. The primary objective of designating this area is to meet the overall veterinary needs of a widespread rural population. A veterinarian in this area would specifically provide care to the beef and dairy cattle and captive cervid populations, as well as smaller numbers of small ruminants and hogs. The veterinarian would maintain active accreditation with the USDA and a sound understanding of the diagnosis and prompt/proper reporting of any suspected foreign or reportable animal disease. Not including Uvalde County, this area has previously been designated as a shortage in the VMLRP with no successful award recipients. Uvalde County is also now experiencing a shortage, and difficulty in recruiting veterinarians willing to do food animal practice. There is one practice in Uvalde capable of hospitalizing food animals covering a huge service area about the size of New Jersey. They have lost two vets to retirement in 2014 and have had trouble hiring to replace those retiring.

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).

It is anticipated that the veterinarian would spend at least 12 hours per week treating food animals, but be comfortable providing care to large and small animals alike. Food animal activities would include tending to individual health concerns of beef cattle, such as emergencies, reproductive work, injuries and general illness as well as serving as a trusted resource to the ranching community on herd health, best management practices, and optimal animal care. The veterinarian would also provide emergency care. Specific activities would include palpation for pregnancy determination, accredited veterinarian duties including brucellosis testing and calfhood vaccination, Coggins testing, writing health certificates, possibly providing service to a local sale barn, and more. Other considerations would be work involving trichomoniasis in cattle and chronic wasting disease in cervids. There are a large number of deer operations in the area, so interest in cervids is desirable. The veterinarian would maintain authorized personnel status from the Texas Animal Health Commission for specific duties such as brucellosis, trichomoniasis and chronic wasting disease work. The Uvalde sale barn, US Border Patrol, and several large ranches in the area are in need of additional veterinary involvement.

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).

One rural practitioner has attempted to retire a number of times in the past 10 years. A previous clinic in Crystal City did not sell after sitting on the market, and was eventually converted into a boutique. Area practices have hosted externs and worked with the veterinary school to recruit recent graduates. One new vet accepted a position in Uvalde in 2014 – however, they only filled a void left by another associate, but did not replace the other two who left Uvalde, or others who have retired further south within the area in past years.

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).

South Texas was home to the first diagnosed cases of cattle brucellosis in the state in over 5 years, as well as recent outbreaks of vesicular stomatitis and anthrax. In addition, the spread of cattle fever ticks into US territory is a constant threat to US cattle and has been since the 1800's. A portion of this area along the Texas-Mexico border remains under permanent quarantine for cattle fever ticks. State and federal veterinary infrastructure provides an organized and effective response capacity throughout the state for any foreign, emerging, or zoonotic disease threat. However, private veterinary practitioners serve crucial functions in the early recognition of foreign and other significant animal disease problems, as well as educating livestock producers about appropriate animal care practices, judicious use of over-the-counter drugs and remedies, and disease recognition and reporting. A decrease in the number of veterinarians directly and frequently inspecting livestock, and an increase in geographic distance between veterinary care and animal populations, over time could lead to an overall decrease in productivity and increased production costs. These consequences have potential effects on the long-term value and quality of animal products that we currently enjoy. Without the existing and threatened veterinary care in Uvalde, the next closest provision of emergency care would be 80 miles north in San Antonio. Supporters of this area being included in the VMLRP have included a state representative, Mayor and County Judge of Uvalde, producer and rural stakeholder groups, and local veterinary practitioners.

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.