

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: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Webb, Willacy, Zapata, 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:

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: 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.

 %

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 regulatory front-line defense for incursion of foreign and emerging animal diseases and pests. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, this six-county area has 198,020 cattle and calves, 13,358 goats, 8584 layers, 6,200 sheep and lambs, 4,711 horses and ponies, 2,246 captive deer, and 1,418 broilers and other meat-type chickens. 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 for the twelve USDA Accredited and TAHC Authorized food animal veterinarians practicing in this multi-county area. This veterinarian 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 in this six-county area. 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 animal 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 Piroplasmosis, working to protect the health of the domestic cattle herd by working to improve animal disease traceability, especially related to imported Mexican original cattle. Additional essential job functions will include: serving as a point of contact with herd owners, working on animal disease trace investigations as assigned by the TAHC Epidemiology staff and applying epidemiological principles to complete those investigations, assisting with the education of veterinary and undergraduate students through guest lectures and supervising interns, when needed. The TAHC Field Veterinarian will participate in employee development activities and training for succession planning within the agency. Additionally, the TAHC Field Veterinarian will coordinate, oversee and provide input on the performance evaluations of supervising inspectors. The TAHC Field Veterinarian will also serve as the TAHC Liaison to federal regulatory personnel in the Los Fresnos Incident Command Post.

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).

TAHC has experienced difficulty and even an inability to fill veterinary vacancies in certain field positions. This position was posted two different times and past recruitment efforts included posting on the TAHC website, on the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Bulletin Board and recruiting from Colleges of Veterinary Medicine on several campuses. In August 2016, TAHC was able to hire a bilingual veterinarian to fill this position. This VMLRP shortage area nomination will be promoted as an incentive to retain this TAHC veterinarian. Support for this VMLRP shortage nomination comes from the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA).

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).

The TAHC Field Veterinarian currently serves as a critical liaison and resource between the TAHC and local officials, local producers, local food animal veterinarians and other state and federal regulatory personnel. The retention of the current TAHC Field Veterinarian is critical and depends on many factors, financial stability being a significant factor. The current TAHC veterinarian is bilingual, has been widely accepted by the local officials, producers, accredited veterinarians and state and federal regulatory personnel, and has a solid understanding of the diversity of regulatory veterinary work in this area. Loss of this TAHC Regulatory Veterinarian due to the need for a higher level of compensation would have significant ramifications on the current regulatory work flow in this area. To cover for a veterinary vacancy in this area, TAHC would need to resume the deployment of other agency field veterinarians to allow the local regulatory work to continue. This deployment process was practiced for twelve months prior to hiring the current field veterinarian. The result of this rotation schedule left the deployed veterinarians permanent assignment unattended during the deployment period. This was not an ideal situation from a safety, efficiency, or consistency perspective, and it was 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 will limit the impact on all levels of livestock marketability valued at \$172.8 million dollars for this six-county area.

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: 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 0524-0050 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.