

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

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Location of Veterinary Shortage:

(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): 116 State Street; Montpelier, VT 05620

(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: _____

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: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Position Title: Assistant State Veterinarian

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

- XFood Safety
- XPublic Health
- XEpidemiology
- XOther: Emergency management; animal welfare;

livestock health; prevention of
zoonotic and FAD disease
introduction

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).

It is the primary responsibility of the Assistant State Veterinarian to manage the day to day operations of the animal health section of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (VAAFM). This responsibility results from the State Veterinarian's time having to be split evenly between animal health activities and those associated with duties of her Director title. Hence, the assistant state veterinarian is the top management level position within VAAFM whose responsibilities relate solely to animal health. The primary objectives of the veterinarian in this position include the following:

- **Protect public health**
- **Protect food safety**
- **Protect and promote the economic viability of Vermont's animal agriculture industries through successful education, technical assistance, and prudent regulation/enforcement**
- **Prevent the introduction of Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) and the spread of domestic and FAD from index herds/flocks to other susceptible livestock and poultry populations**
- **Provide assistance to, and protect Vermonters and their livestock/companion animals from, the deleterious effects of manmade and natural disasters**

These objectives are best accomplished through close collaboration with internal VAAFM co-workers, other state colleagues such as officials in the Vermont Department of Health and the University of Vermont Extension Service, and colleagues in other states and the federal government.

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).

The Vermont Assistant State Veterinarian is expected to devote at least 80% of his or her professional time (32 hrs/week) to the activities listed under the Type 111 Shortage category. Those activities are numerous and varied and exceed the allowance in this submission, but some of the most essential activities are listed below:

- **Enforce the disease testing and livestock interstate movement regulations within Vermont**
- **Assist with dispositions of retained carcass at Vermont's state and federally inspected slaughterhouses**
- **Work with state-level veterinary and physician colleagues to determine the origin of food-borne human illness when outbreaks are suspected of originating from animal-based food products**
- **Maintain a presence, and perform regulatory duties, at all Vermont agricultural events, including fairs, bird swaps, farmers markets and trade shows to help promote an understanding of Vermont's animal related laws and regulations**
- **Assist law enforcement and humane societies in the criminal investigation of livestock cruelty and abuse cases**
- **Investigate veterinary and producer reports of disease outbreaks in livestock and poultry populations to ensure no evidence of FAD and to limit spread through issuance of quarantines when warranted**
- **Interpret, implement and maintain compliance with federally promulgated rules, including but not limited to those pertaining to CWD, TB/Brucellosis, ADT and FSMA.**
- **Draft, update and exercise applicable emergency plans including the National Veterinary Stockpile plan, the SSF11 plan and its Animal Disaster Emergency Preparedness Annex, the Highly Contagious Disease Plan and the Avian Influenza Plan.**
- **Provide expertise to local, state and federal emergency management colleagues during disasters that affect animals**

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).

VAAFM's 2012 recruitment efforts resulted in the hire of an assistant state veterinarian in May of that year. VAAFM made an effort to recruit and retain an assistant state veterinarian twice in the 18 months immediately preceding this hire. VAAFM veterinary salaries are below the national average, as compared to colleagues in other states performing similar duties. This was evidenced by a recent informal survey that was done as part of a 2010 National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials initiative. Conversely, the cost of living in Vermont is higher than the national average. The previous VAAFM assistant state veterinarian hired in October 2010 left the position after only 15 months of employment due to the ability to secure a higher salary and more lucrative benefits in a federal position. Additionally, during that recruitment effort, two qualified veterinarians declined interviews due to the proposed starting salary. VAAFM's current assistant state veterinarian struggled to justify a cross-country relocation with current deferred student loan burden and a salary that is not commensurate with her skills or experience and that is limited by a state budget which has undergone significant rescissions in recent years. Despite the fact that VAAFM has hired a qualified veterinarian, the ability to retain her without an educational loan repayment incentive is uncertain.

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).

Despite the fact that VAAFM currently employs an assistant state veterinarian, the likelihood of retaining the individual over a productive period of time may not be high due to lack of opportunity for advancement under state budget constraints and a competitive public service employment market. In order for VAAFM to begin to see a return on its time investment with any new professional employee, that individual needs to be retained for a minimum of three to five years, and longer is preferable. An employment period that is shorter than that results in important projects initiated to achieve the goals referenced above having to be set aside temporarily or abandoned altogether. Additionally, it interferes with effective personnel supervision and may result in essential animal health field staff struggling with core duties. Finally, frequent turnover in the position prevents the veterinarian from developing a working relationship with, and gaining the trust of, the regulated community, producers and stakeholders that he or she serves, thereby lessening the frequency with which these stakeholders reach out to the veterinary staff employed by VAAFM. This erosive disconnect can increase the chance that a highly contagious disease remains undetected for an extended period, lessen the security of the local food supply, and increase the potential for the livestock and pet owning populations to remain in need during manmade and natural emergencies that impact animals. Because of the relatively small size of New England and the robust interstate and international (through Vermont's border with Canada) movement of livestock and their products, allowing the assistant state veterinary position to turn over at an unacceptable rate could have regional and international repercussions as well as intrastate ones.

(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.

80%

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

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: Kristin M. Haas, DVM

Title: State Veterinarian and Director of Food Safety & Consumer Protection Division

Organization: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Kristin.haas@state.vt.us

Email: (802)828-2426

Telephone Number: _____
(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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