

February 25, 2008

USAHA Call to Action

The March 15th deadline for crafting a new Farm Bill is fast approaching with Senate and House leaders negotiating elements of the bill of which two are critical to animal health stakeholders.

The Veterinary Workforce Grant Program - Section 11014 and The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment - Section 7003 of the U.S. 2007 Farm Bill

The Senate and House Agricultural Committees are now preparing for the joint Conference Committee addressing differences between both Houses on the 2007 Farm Bill. The Senate version of the Bill include two critical elements addressing veterinary workforce issues, 1) the Veterinary Workforce Grant Program – Section 11014; and 2) the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program – Section 7003.

To date only the Senate has named Farm Bill Conference Conferees. It is important that the Conference Committee hears the message of industry support for Sections 11014 and 7003. **U.S. veterinary food animal medicine needs can be resolved by including Sections 11014 and 7003 in the final version of the 2007 Farm Bill**

The number of veterinarians in food supply veterinary medicine continues to decline at a rate of 5% per year. Currently less than 10% of the veterinary profession is involved in food supply veterinary medicine. These veterinarians are responsible for the health and welfare of 10 billion poultry, 100 million cattle, 100 million pigs and a variety of other livestock and poultry.

USAHA has supported the initiatives outlined in the Veterinary Workforce Grant Program with Resolutions from 2005, 2006 and 2007. Additionally, USAHA's 2007 Resolution 31 supports the initiatives outlined in the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program.

Please review the directions and talking points on the USAHA website <http://www.usaha.org/CallToAction.shtml> and take 2 to 4 minutes to call or fax your Senator if he or she is listed on the list linked below to urge them or their agriculture staff person to consider the merits of the Farm Bill Sections 11014 and 7003.

Farm Bill Conference Committee:

Senate: <http://www.usaha.org/SenateFarmBillConferenceCommDirectory.pdf>

House [Conferees yet to be named]