

USAHA News Flash, January 9, 2008

The Nation's Veterinary Workforce Needs Addressed in the Senate Version of the 2007 Farm Bill

Section 11014 THE VETERINARY WORKFORCE GRANT PROGRAM

Section 7003 THE VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT

U.S. veterinary medicine needs can be resolved by including Sections 11014 and 7003 in the final version of the 2007 Farm Bill.

Listed below is key information from the National Research Council of the National Academies, Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, American Veterinary Medical Association and Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges that highlights the veterinary medicine needs.

- There are only 28 U.S. colleges of veterinary medicine; they graduated 2,478 veterinarians in 2007. These colleges are at maximum capacity for students they can accept due to space limitations for diagnostics research, laboratories and teaching facilities.
- There is currently an identified shortage of 1,500 veterinarians in the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Homeland Security and in national/local veterinary positions in biosecurity, domestic and foreign animal disease research, rural practice, wildlife disease control, animal care and welfare, and laboratory animal care and research.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2025 the human population will increase 15 percent. Historically animal populations increase proportionally. With today's shortages combined with projected increases over the next 20 years, there will be a shortage of 15,000 veterinarians.
- In order to provide the current level of veterinary medical services for society, in the next 40 years there will be an equivalent need of 9 veterinary medical colleges due to the projected increase in population.
- 43 % of veterinary pathology positions are unfilled today and many pathologists are nearing retirement.
- There is currently a shortage of 500 food animal private veterinarians and that number is increasing every year.

In July 2005, the National Research Council of the National Academies called for the country to build veterinary capacity through both recruitment and preparation of additional veterinary graduates into careers of food systems, biomedical research, diagnostic laboratory investigation, pathology, epidemiology, ecosystem, and health and food animal practice. In addition the National Academies called for competitive grants to be made available to scientists to upgrade equipment for animal disease research and to construct and maintain government and university biosafety facilities for livestock, poultry, and wildlife.

There is an Urgent Need for you to
Contact Senators and House Members of Congress

These needs still exist. Please contact key House and Senate members of Congress to ensure these important Sections 11014 and 7003 are included in the final 2007 Farm Bill. The contact information for the members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and the House Committee on Agriculture is available at:

<http://www.usaha.org/SenateHouseAgCommDirectory.pdf>.

If you are unable to speak directly with the House or Senate member, ask to speak with the agriculture assistant in the office who is responsible for the Farm Bill.