

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 14 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT
PROGRAM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) was established by Congress in 2003 by the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA) and is a student loan repayment program for veterinarians who practice in underserved areas. This loan repayment program is to be administered by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Secretary of Agriculture can determine veterinary shortage areas in rural practice, urban practice, federal and state government agencies, and discipline areas. Recently highlighted awareness of bioterrorism and foreign animal disease threats to public health and food safety has heightened the urgency for a fully-funded and implemented program. The VMLRP also creates a reserve corps of veterinarians available for mobilization in the event of an animal disease emergency or disaster.

USDA published interim final regulations to govern the program in the July 9, 2009 Federal Register. Veterinarians participating in the program will be required to practice in designated areas of veterinarian shortages which will be published in the Federal Register.

Adequate funding for VMLRP is \$20 million annually. Congress awarded the program modest appropriations in fiscal years 2006 (\$495,000), 2007 (\$495,000), 2008 (\$868,875) and 2009 (\$2,950,000). The President recommended \$3 million for fiscal year 2010. Congress appropriated \$4.8M for the VMLRP in the fiscal year 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Bill.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Congress fund the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) (PL 108-161) at \$20 million for fiscal year 2011.