



Report from National Assn of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV)
Workforce Perspectives Relative to
the New Administration

**US AHA/AAVLD Committee on Diagnostic
Laboratory and Veterinary Workforce Development**

October 14, 2017

NAFV Issues

A Broad Range

- **High level government engagement**
 - Congress, Senate and House of Representatives
 - Lobbyist
 - FTC
 - Agencies
 - OPM, GAO
 - Affiliated organizations: NARFE, AVMA, AAVMC, etc.
 - Bridge all USG agencies with Federal Veterinarians
- **Individual employee, retiree engagement**
 - Professional insurance
 - Legal counsel
 - Career advice
 - Continuing education

Proposed Legislation affecting Federal Veterinary Retirement

- **Increase retirement contribution 1% / year x next 6 years**
- **Limit government contribution to health plans to only rate of general inflation and not medical cost inflation- Create a voucher program**
- **Use chained Consumer Price Index to calculate Social Security increases**
- **Weaken TSP G fund (fm. av. 2.25% to 0.02%)**

NAFV opposes all the above

Proposed Legislation affecting Federal Veterinary Retirement

- **End FERS annuities altogether, or**
- **End COLA increases for FERS (COLA would then be only for SS portion of retirement)**
- **Retirement based on high 5 (instead of high 3)**
- **End FERS Supplement fm. 2018 forward**

NAFV opposes all of the above

Legislative Update

Apparently Little Support for these Big Changes in this Congress

- On July 18, US **Democratic Senators** wrote to the Majority and Minority leaders of the Senate, asking that in developing Congressional budgets, Federal Retirement not be modified as proposed in the Administration's budget
- This is in addition to a letter sent July 10 by **House Republicans** to a House committee, likewise asking that Federal Retirement not be changed

Legislative Update

- The Senators' letter cited two reasons for not changing retirement parameters:
- 1) so as not to **renege on promises** made to current Federal workers, and
- 2) to position Federal Government to compete in the market place of **attracting a new generation** of skilled workers

NAFV agrees with the Congresspersons' positions above

Current NAFV Concerns

General Monitoring Activities

- **Reducing the Federal workforce through attrition**
- **Replacement of Veterinarians with other job series**
- **Filling staffing ceilings with job series other than veterinarians**
- **Shifts in professional titles and attitudes of management**
- **Budget priorities**

Potential Issues

- Restructuring of the Federal Government
 - e.g. creation of USDA USec for Trade
 - move of CODEX from FSIS to the above.

NAFV has prepared comments in opposition to CODEX move

- Holeman Rule – Reconstruction Age rule which allows individual members of Congress to **target** a specific federal **employee** for firing or salary reduction and/or **individual government offices** for reduction or elimination

FSIS Current Challenges

Food Safety Threat

- FSIS has, for the first time in its 110 year history, proposed changes that **remove veterinarians** from their direct role in food safety
- Instead they are **placing lay inspectors** into the primary decision making roles with much less direct supervision or oversight from the Supervisory Public Health Veterinarians (SPHV)

While not a new issue of this administration, NAFV will work on this issue with new administration

Why does NAFV support veterinary inspection in plants?

- Veterinary education prepares the in-plant supervisor have the knowledge and skills to analyze carcasses and make dispositions**
- Foreign animal diseases may first be seen in slaughter**
- Only veterinarians are prepared to respond to FADs or agro/bioterrorism**

**To resolve the critical FSIS veterinary shortages
NAFV has proposed a
Supervisory Public Health Veterinary (SPHV)
Staffing Plan**

- NAFV has provided FSIS with a SPHV staffing plan that incorporates **three simple actions** to ameliorate recurring issues with hiring and retaining these professionals

SPHV Staffing Plan Key Components

(Action 1)

All slaughter plants must be **under the direct in-plant supervision of a Supervisory Public Health Veterinarians (SPHV)**; Federal veterinarians, as animal and public health professionals, are uniquely equipped to lead the inspection and food safety processes necessary to protect Americans' food source

SPHV Staffing Plan Key Components

(Action 2)

Remuneration and incentives of SPHV's must be immediately improved to be commensurate with their extensive education and expertise to be competitive with the private sector; and

SPHV Staffing Plan Key Components

(Action 3)

Providing administrative leave and support for annual professional **continuing education and training** is essential to retaining SPHVs

SPHV Staffing Plan

Other Key Components

- Specialty Pay (this includes all federal veterinarians)
- Board Certification Pay
- Additional recruitment and retention incentives for difficult-to-fill positions
- Allow private veterinary practitioners to work part time for FSIS

Specialty Pay

- Provide **specialty pay** to all veterinarians in federal service, regardless of their employment series (comparable to the Title 38 medical personnel pay, currently received by federal physicians, dentists, nurses, etc.)
- Working with Congressional members to include this in the next **Farm Bill**

SPHV Staffing Plan Support

- NAFV has garnered support for the SPHV staffing plan components from key **congressional members**, as well as several **veterinary associations** and **commodity groups**
- We are also working to obtain appropriations and adding language to the next **Farm Bill** to require veterinary oversight in federal and state meat inspection