

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 13 **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: INCREASING THE VETERINARY WORKFORCE BY
EXPANDING VETERINARY MEDICAL SCHOOL
CAPACITY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Veterinary medicine is essential to public health, food safety, and national security. There is a critical shortage of veterinarians in certain key public practice areas such as bioterrorism and emergency preparedness, environmental health, food safety and food security, regulatory medicine, diagnostic laboratory medicine, and biomedical research. The nation's veterinary medical colleges are at capacity and can enroll only 2,600 students per year. Although these colleges provide a national resource by training veterinarians, only 26 states provide direct support to the 28 colleges. Federal support is needed to increase capacity in veterinary medical education. The United States Congress has not directly supported veterinary medical education in over 30 years. Without a sufficient supply of veterinarians with the unique training needed to respond to an emergency, the nation's public health infrastructure is at risk.

In 2007 and 2008, two new programs were signed into law to address the lack of capacity within veterinary schools; the School of Veterinary Medicine Competitive Grant Program (authorized in the United States Department of Health and Human Services) and the Agricultural Biosecurity Grant Program (authorized in the United States Department of Agriculture). While these two new programs were inspired by past efforts to pass workforce expansion bills for academic veterinary medicine, they lack authorization language providing for more comprehensive construction in lieu of "minor renovations and improvements". It has not been determined how effective these new grants will be at alleviating the shortage of veterinarians in the workforce and the lack of capacity at veterinary schools.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) develop regulations and implementation plans for the School of Veterinary Medicine Competitive Grant Program (SVMCGP) and the Agricultural Biosecurity Grant Program (ABGP).

USAHA also requests the newly elected President of the United States include funding for SVMCGP and ABGP in the President's Annual Budget request.

Additionally, USAHA requests the House of Representatives and Senate Agriculture Appropriations committees fund SVMCGP and ABGP at \$15 million each per year.