

Veterinarian Shortage Situation Nomination Form

To be completed by the chief State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or his/her designee

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)

Nomination of Veterinarian Shortage Situations for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Authorized Under the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA)

Note: Please submit one separate nomination form for each position. See solicitation for number of nominations permitted for your state or insular area.

Veterinary Shortage ID Code: TX118

Location of Veterinary Shortage Area for this Nomination

Note: If this nomination is for a public practice position, please provide the location of the home office or the center of service area.

Zapata and Starr Counties – South Texas

Location of Veterinary Shortage:

_____ (e.g., County, State/Insular Area)

Center of Service Area or
 Location of Position:

Intersection of Hwy 83 and Loma Blanca Rd – between Zapata and Rio Grande City, Texas

_____ (e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

Type of Veterinary Practice Area/Discipline/Specialty

Type I Shortage: Private Practice

Food Animal Medicine (at least 80 percent time)

Please select **one or more** specialties requested for this position:

- Beef Cattle
- Dairy Cattle
- Swine
- Poultry
- Small Ruminant
- Other _____

Type II Shortage: Private Practice – Rural Area

Food Animal Medicine (at least 30 percent time)

Please select **one or more** specialties requested for this position:

- Beef Cattle
- Dairy Cattle
- Swine
- Poultry
- Small Ruminant
- Other : _ Equine – both racehorses and working ranch horses

Type III Shortage: Public Practice (at least 49 percent time*)

Employer: _____ Position Title: _____

Please select **one or more** specialty/disciplinary areas.

- Food Safety
- Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Other: _____

Please describe the objectives of a veterinarian meeting this shortage situation as well as being located in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 200 words or less).

There is a dire need for a veterinarian to serve the food animal and working equine population in this two-county area near the Mexican border. While the center of service has been listed as Rio Grande City where an existing mixed animal practice seeks an associate and the solo practitioner no longer treats food animals due to health concerns, a veterinarian could also work out of Zapata where there is a vacant practice for sale. The two primary objectives of a veterinarian in this area would be, 1) to provide veterinary care to food animals (predominantly beef cattle) which are now mostly tended by lay people/ranchers themselves due to complete lack of veterinary access, and 2) to provide veterinary care to the area's working horses, some of which are currently hauled as far as McAllen (~100 miles) for basic services such as vaccines and blood collection. This is an area of great concern for the entire state and nation due to proximity to the Mexican border and Mexican Cattle Fever. Portions of the area are currently under preventive fever tick quarantine. The state expects the awardee would spend at least 40-50% of their time with food animals.

Please describe the activities of a veterinarian meeting this shortage situation and being located in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 200 words or less).

Daily activities would include tending to both the individual health concerns of beef cattle such as emergencies, reproductive work, injuries and general illness, as well as serving as a trusted resource to the ranching community on herd health, best management practices and animal care and welfare. Many lay people in this community are well-versed in performing many of their own common procedures on cattle. A veterinarian would need to gain the trust of these ranchers and work within their existing knowledge base to help improve management practices, be available for emergencies, and be the first line of defense against infectious disease. Specific activities would include pregnancy determination, regulatory work including brucellosis testing and vaccination, Coggins testing, health certificates, working a local sale barn, and more. The veterinarian would serve as a guardian against foreign animal disease in the area and be constantly vigilant to diagnosing such diseases.

Please describe any past efforts to recruit and retain a veterinarian in the shortage situation identified above (limit your response to 100 words or less).

One practitioner in Zapata tried to recruit an associate or sell his practice for 5 years prior to his retirement. At present, that mixed practice sits vacant and for-sale with no interest from veterinarians looking to purchase it. Another practitioner in Rio Grande City services the Zapata area once a month but has scaled back his practice due to health. He has plans to retire and hopes to recruit an associate. Despite activities such as advertisement and working with the local community and Texas A&M, it has been difficult to recruit a veterinarian to this area.

Please describe the risk of this veterinarian position not being secured or retained. Include the risk(s) to the production of a safe and wholesome food supply and to animal, human, and environmental health not only in the community but in the region, state/insular area, nation, and/or international community (limit your response to 250 words or less).

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there are approximately 80,000 food animals in these two counties. The majority of food animals are beef cattle and there are also estimated to be 2000-4000 horses in the area. One area rancher reports that without veterinary care for cattle, they "practice what they know and if it doesn't work then there's only one option left." In addition to the risks to individual animal health if a veterinarian is not secured in this area, herd health will suffer in the long run. There is a huge risk of both zoonotic diseases and foreign or emerging animal diseases entering the area and going undiagnosed until they have already become too widespread to contain. An outbreak of something like foot and mouth disease in this area could have devastating consequences to the national

food supply, economy and international trade. Slow response time due to lack of veterinary attention could be disastrous. In addition, the spread of fever ticks into US territory is a constant threat to US cattle and has been since the 1800's.

Please indicate whether you consider this situation/position a candidate for a "service in emergency" agreement (limit your response to 100 words or less). Please see solicitations for additional information regarding the obligation of participants who enter into the "Service in Emergency" agreement.

N/A

Authorized State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or designee:

Dee Ellis, DVM, MPA
Name: (point of contact Holly Poremski, DVM)
State Veterinarian/Executive Director
Title: _____
Texas Animal Health Commission
Organization: _____
comments@tahc.state.tx.us
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(Area code required)

Public reporting for OMB control number 0524-0046 is estimated to average two hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information, unless it displays a current valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to NIFA, OEP, 800 9th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.

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