



The Science Source for Food,
Agricultural, and Environmental Issues

Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the US Food Supply

(Issue Paper) Chair: Christine Navarre, Louisiana State University

Overview:

The veterinary profession has struggled with a central workforce-related question—why is it difficult to recruit and retain food animal veterinarians in the United States? This issue paper will address the many factors that impact this critical issue.

Food animal veterinarians in the United States safeguard livestock, poultry, and aquatic food animal health and welfare as well as food safety and quality along the entire “farm to fork” continuum. In doing so they help to ensure the financial sustainability of producers and global food security. Of particular importance is the role veterinarians play in preparation for and mitigation of emerging or transboundary (foreign animal) disease outbreaks which could have serious economic impacts on the entire U.S. economy as well as possible public health concerns regarding zoonosis and food security.

Learning Outcomes

- *Identify the issues that surround both recruiting and retaining students and veterinarians in food animal medicine.*
 - *Explain why veterinary students may or may not choose food animal medicine.*
 - *Explore the different areas of food animal medicine.*
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Resources

Access the Issue Paper, Ag quickCAST, and webinar here: <https://www.cast-science.org/publication/impact-of-recruitment-and-retention-of-food-animal-veterinarians-on-the-u-s-food-supply/>

CAST blog: <https://www.cast-science.org/a-student-perspective-on-recruiting-future-food-animal-veterinarians/>

“Recruitment of Veterinarians for Rural Communities through Education: The Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas”: <https://newprairiepress.org/ojrrp/vol5/iss7/3/>

“Call the vet! Rural veterinary medicine is struggling: Here’s what happened and how we can fix it”: <https://www.agriculture.com/livestock/call-the-vet-rural-veterinary-medicine-is-struggling>

“Shortage Of Rural Veterinarians Puts Farmers, Food Supply At Risk”:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/06/16/620387349/shortage-of-rural-veterinarians-puts-farmers-food-supply-at-risk>



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Assessment Questions

1. Write a summary of this article highlighting 3-5 important facts you learned.
2. What are some of the reasons keeping students from choosing food animal medicine? What helps push students to it?
3. Look at the Figure 1 diagram. Explain how these relationships are connected. For example, when an area grows in population and becomes more urbanized, what happens to students with food animal experience? Are there any relationships that are surprising to you?
4. Table 2 summarizes tactics used to get students interested in food animal medicine. What new solution could be added to this table? Why? Feel free to get creative in your solution.
5. What are some of the reasons keeping students from choosing food animal medicine? What helps push students to it?

Student Reflection

1. Imagine you are in charge of a veterinary practice. What would you do to help hire and keep food animal veterinarians in your practice?
2. Are there other agricultural jobs that might be hard to recruit and retain people in? Write about some of these jobs and the reasons you think people might not be interested in them or might leave them for other jobs. Do you think any of the strategies proposed in this article might also be effective at recruiting or retaining people in those jobs? Why or why not?