

# 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.**

**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.

Big Horn Basin (Park, Big Horn, Washakie and Hot Springs counties), Wyoming

Location of Veterinary Shortage:

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

Center of Service Area or  
 Location of Position:

Worland (82401) and Greybull (82426) Wyoming

(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 : \_\_\_\_\_

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).**

According to the AVMA website (Dec. 2008), the Big Horn Basin contains 228,768 food animals and 14 practicing food animal veterinarians (average of 16,340 food animals/veterinarian). However, many of those veterinarians currently conduct very little, if any, true production food animal medicine. Additionally, many of these veterinarians are nearing retirement. For example, Park County has 8 veterinarians who offer at least some food animal services. However, at least 6 of them hope to retire in 4-5 years. It is our objective to use this program to attract a new veterinarian into the area who would conduct a high workload directed at food animal production medicine.

We hope that a new veterinarian will assist producers in the area meet their regulatory requirements. Many producers complain that they cannot find a veterinarian to carry out regulatory veterinary requirements. The Big Horn Basin includes a Sale Barn and is also the area of the three latest brucellosis outbreaks all of which occurred within the last 6 months.

We expect this new veterinarian would conduct at least 40% FTE food animal medicine (i.e. 16 hours/week). It is unlikely that they would be able to maintain an exclusive food animal practice due to the rural nature of the basin and the expectation that a veterinarian provide services to all animals in need.

**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).**

This area has recently seen a great increase in brucellosis prevalence among elk. This has led to transmission to cattle on 3 separate occasions and has led the Wyoming Livestock Board to include much of the Big Horn Basin in the Brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area. All this has caused a great increase in testing requirements for cattle- an increase that has been difficult, if not impossible, for the existing practitioners to meet. Any new veterinarian recruited into the Big Horn basin would be expected to: assist in sampling cattle for brucellosis testing, educate producers about brucellosis, and ensure that aborted fetuses are sampled and submitted for Brucellosis (and other infectious agent) testing. Additionally this area has periodically experienced bluetongue outbreaks, the most recent of which was devastating to several sheep producers. One reason that the outbreak was not controlled was that no veterinarian was available to assist these producers. This new veterinarian would be able to respond to future outbreaks and also offer preventative measures and advice on bluetongue and other diseases.

Any veterinarian setting up in the Bighorn Basin must understand cow-calf operations and sheep production. They should be able to provide advice to the sale barn on biosecurity and be prepared for a disease outbreak.

**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).**

The state of Wyoming instituted a student loan repayment program to recruit new food animal veterinarians moving into underserved areas in 2008. The Big Horn basin was identified as such an area. Under the state program we have recruited one veterinarian into Worland (Washakie County) in 2008 and another into Basin (Big Horn County) in 2010. However, we still consider the area underserved.

**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).**

The current food animal veterinary work force is barely able to meet the demand in the Big Horn basin of Wyoming. When existing veterinarians retire or otherwise discontinue offering food animal services, the producers will not be able to deal with brucellosis and other disease issues; this may force them out of business. This would not only reduce the nation's supply of beef, but many of these ranches would subsequently subdivide. This would impact the region, state, and nation as the area is considered a national treasure for its abundance of wildlife. Such development would have a great impact on the wildlife and other natural resources of the area.

Likewise, sheep production in the area is vulnerable to another disease outbreak. If a bluetongue epidemic or scrapie case occurred in the area without an adequate response from local veterinarians, many sheep producers will go bankrupt and be forced to sell their operations. This would be devastating to the families, their communities and potentially the state and nation when the ranches are subdivided with results described above.

Additionally, the State Veterinarian has public health and bioterrorism concerns. We realize that small sale barns, like the one in the basin, without high levels of security are at risk for a agro terrorism disease introduction. If a highly infectious disease were introduced into the sale barn we are concerned that we do not have the veterinary workforce in the area to adequately address it. We have similar concerns about containing zoonotic diseases.

**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.**

We were unable to locate solicitation information on this program. While we believe the area may qualify for a “service in emergency” agreement we also note that the shortage experienced in the Big Horn Basin is a long-term problem and must be dealt with understanding that perspective.

Authorized State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or designee:

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