

# Who is a livestock veterinarian?



Livestock veterinarians are veterinary professionals that care for a multitude of animals including cattle, swine, goats, and sheep.



## The importance of livestock veterinarians

Livestock veterinarians also play a key role in the food industry, helping to deliver high quality health to food animals. Many farms today have to pass animal welfare audits. Veterinarians are helping to solve facility issues, designing barns, and helping to prevent pneumonia with better ventilation systems.<sup>2</sup>



## The shortage in livestock veterinarians

There are about 500 counties in the U.S. underserved by a veterinarian in 2019, according to the USDA. The vast majority are in rural areas. There are shortages this year in 44 states.

Only about 10% of final-year students at veterinary schools have an interest in food animal medicine at graduation.<sup>3</sup>



## How long does it take to become a large animal vet?

Becoming a veterinarian requires the completion of an accredited veterinary school program as well as state licensing.

The time it takes to become a veterinarian can depend on an individual's circumstances and career goals, but typically will require at least eight years of post-high school education.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of the more common emergencies that veterinarians are called to see is an animal having trouble giving a birth (called dystocia).



## 2010 Food Safety Modernization Act

Expands the inspection power of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) over farms and increases the need for improved hygiene on the farm.

## Incentives to become a livestock veterinarian

- The federal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLP) pays up to \$25,000 each year toward student loans of eligible veterinarians who agree to serve in a designated shortage area for three years. Vet schools can also get grants from the USDA to improve the hands-on experience for food animal students, to provide continuing education for rural vets, and more.<sup>7</sup>
- Penn Vet has several full-ride (tuition and fees) scholarships for students who show an interest in rural, food animal practices.
- Kansas has a rural veterinarian loan repayment program, where five students in every class get a loan for \$20,000 a year. The state will repay that loan for every year that they practice in a county with fewer than 35,000 people.<sup>3</sup>
- The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine has an early commitment program for rural students in animal science programs. If students maintain their academic record and continued demonstration of interest, those students have a guaranteed seat in the class of veterinary medicine.<sup>3</sup>

	Total of all employed veterinarians in the U.S.*	Percent of total	Male%	Female %
Private Clinical Practice <sup>1</sup>				
Food animal exclusive	1,286	1.8%	77.1%	22.9%
Food animal predominant	3,105	8.7%	74.3%	25.7%

\*As of December 31, 2018

### SOURCES

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3. <https://www.agriculture.com/livestock/call-the-vet-rural-veterinary-medicine-is-struggling>
4. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/agcareers/the-7-ag-food-and-natural-resources-pathways/animal-systems/large-animal-veterinarian/>
5. <https://www.veterinarianedu.org/large-animal-vet/>
6. <https://work.chron.com/information-becoming-largeanimal-vet-13844.html>