



**A Report from the  
Veterinary Shortage Working Group**

on the Large and Food Animal  
Veterinarian Shortage

December 20, 2023



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Veterinary Shortage Working Group (VSWG) members, I am pleased to provide this report. For the past nine months, the VSWG members, along with others serving on the committees, have diligently worked to identify and develop solutions to address the large and food animal veterinarian shortage. As you will find, there is not one or two simple answers. It will take many approaches, programs, and organizations, along with time, to address a problem that has been developing for more than a decade.

Kentucky is not alone in this problem. In 2021, USDA identified more than 500 counties in the U.S. as veterinarian shortage areas. For more than a decade, leaders in Kentucky have worked on various solutions. I believe our efforts, which started in the spring of 2022, have for the first time taken a comprehensive look at the facts that led to this problem and worked to identify the wide variety of possibilities to resolve it.

The VSWG created four committees to look at a particular period in the life of a veterinarian:

- Developing a strong pipeline of Kentucky students to veterinary school;
- Opportunities in veterinary school, what should Kentucky focus on to assist;
- From veterinary school to rural/large animal practice, Kentucky's role; and
- Keeping veterinarians in rural/large animal practice, what can we do.

The information and recommendations in this report come from each of those four committees.

Some of the ideas in this report will require government action. Without question, there is a role for state and federal governments to assist in solving this issue. However, others can be termed as self-help with the veterinary and agriculture communities working together, in some cases on a case-by-case or in local efforts. Some of the tools to aid in these efforts have already been developed.

I extend a special thank you to the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association's Executive Director Debra Hamelback and the Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiner's Executive Director Michelle Shane for their dedication and leadership on this effort since we began this journey in the spring of 2022. One of the success stories in our efforts has been the involvement of those two organizations and veterinarians all across the commonwealth.

As I close out my term as Commissioner of Agriculture, I hope the work we have accomplished over the past 18 months along with this report provide a foundation for the leadership in our veterinarian and agricultural communities to advance the work that has begun.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ryan F. Quarles  
Commissioner of Agriculture



## **Veterinary Shortage Working Group Members**

The Veterinary Shortage Working Group (VSWG) was appointed by Commissioner of Agriculture, Dr. Ryan F. Quarles on February 3, 2023. Made up of agriculture industry stakeholders, the VSWG was charged with the task of looking for solutions to Kentucky's large animal veterinarian shortage. Those named to the group and who they represent are:

- Dr. Ryan F. Quarles, Commissioner of Agriculture, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
- Dustin Blosser, Kentucky Alternative Livestock Association
- Sarah E. Coleman, Kentucky Horse Council
- Dr. Randall Evans, Lincoln Memorial University
- Sharon Furches, Kentucky Farm Bureau
- Dr. Tim Gardner, Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners
- Becky Gilpatrick, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority
- Dr. Beth Johnson, Kentucky Sheep & Goat Development Office
- Dr. Gordon Jones, Kentucky Agriculture Development Board
- Dr. Jon Laster, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
- Dennis Liptrap, Kentucky Pork Producers
- Dr. James MacLeod, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
- Dave Maples, Kentucky Cattlemen Association
- Aaron Miller, Kentucky Poultry Federation
- Caleb Ragland, Kentucky Livestock Coalition and Kentucky Soybean Association
- Mark Reding, State Board of Agriculture
- Dr. Debbie Reed, Breathitt Veterinary Center and Murray State University
- Dr. Andy Roberts, Kentucky Association of Equine Practitioners
- Glen Sellers, Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Dr. Andrea Sexten, Eastern Kentucky University
- Dr. Charles Townsend, Kentucky Dairy Development Council
- Dr. R. Steve Velasco, State Veterinarian, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Office of State Veterinarian

The staff that supported the VSWG and its committees were:

- Debra Hamelback, Executive Director, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
- Michelle Shane, Executive Director, Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners
- Keith L. Rogers, Chief of Staff, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
- Haley V. Buchanan, Executive Administrative Asst., Office of the Commissioner, KDA

A special thanks to the Farm Journal Foundation's Todd Greenwood and Tricia Beal, for their support of the VSWG and work on the national level to address the shortage of large animal veterinarians.

## **Actions and Accomplishments in the past 18 months**

For the past eighteen months, the members and organizations involved in the Veterinary Shortage Working Group (VSWG) have actively worked in identifying solutions to the large and food animal veterinarian shortage through public dialogues, new programs, and education. All of the members of the VSWG have recognized the vast shortage of large and food animal veterinarians in Kentucky and especially in rural areas. The following is a summary of the actions to date:

- In the spring of 2022, the Kentucky Board of Examiners (KBVE) completed its first “Licensee Demographics report” examining veterinarians and their offered services in Kentucky. Of the more than 2,500 active veterinarian licensees, only approximately 1,660 identified a Kentucky mailing address. Of those Kentucky practitioners, 39% were identified as 55 years or older, possibly within 10 years of retirement age. The report also identified that fewer than 3% of Kentucky veterinarians who dedicated 70% or more of their time to large/food animal work. It was this data that helped ignite the conversation surrounding the veterinary shortages issue.
- On June 15, 2022, Commissioner Quarles, the KBVE, and Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association (KVMA) took the first step in bringing attention to the issue by hosting the first Stakeholder’s Dialogue on the Status of Large Animal Veterinarians at the Kentucky State University Research farm. Presentations were provided by the State Veterinarian, KBVE, KVMA, Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC), and Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine (AUCVM). The meeting was hailed as a great success with 66 people attending from more than 25 organizations.
- In early summer of 2022, the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC), Board of Directors reviewed and updated the guidelines for its Large/Food Animal Veterinary Loan Program (LFAVLP). The KAFC, part of the KDA, is staffed by the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy. The purpose of the LFAVLP is to assist individuals licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Kentucky who desire to construct, expand, equip or buy into a practice serving large farm animal producers, including goat, sheep, swine, and other smaller food animals. The updated guidelines help veterinarians early in their career access the program even if they are carrying high levels of debt. These loans can help lower the overall interest rates, to date five loans have been approved.
- On October 4, 2022, representatives of the KVMA, KBVE, and KDA traveled to Auburn University to launch the first Kentucky Day at Auburn and kickoff the establishment of the KVMA Student Chapter. KVMA sponsored a dinner that evening for Kentucky students with presentations from those organizations attending. The purpose of the chapter, it has allowed for open communication and networking for students interested in working in Kentucky. By doing so, it will allow Kentucky to showcase what it has to offer along with helping establish relationships not only with students, but also with the faculty as well.

- In October of 2022, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) approved the Large and Food Animal Veterinary Incentives Program to provide grant funding to veterinarians to increase service to large and food animals. A first of its kind program for KADB, it uses state funds to match county funds in a 5:1 state/county ratio. Applicants are limited to 75% for eligible expenditures not to exceed more than \$100,000 in state and county funds. This program can be used in conjunction with the KAFC loan program.
- With the success of the first Dialogue in June, the KDA, KVMA, and KBVE hosted the second Stakeholder's Dialogue on the Status of Large Animal Veterinarians in Louisville during the North American International Livestock Exposition on November 14, 2022. The focus of the event was to dig a little deeper into the relationships between veterinarians and farmers. The location of the meeting allowed for several producers to partake in the meeting and to hear firsthand presentations from KADB, Lincoln Memorial University (LMU), AUCVM, and a panel of veterinarians and producers. The consensus from the participants was to create a working group to advance the ideas and conversations identified during the two Dialogues.
- Early in 2023, Commissioner Quarles received nominations for the creation of the working group identified at the second Dialogue. In February, he appointed 20 members to the Veterinary Shortage Working Group (VSWG), representing 23 organizations. The VSWG was charged with the task to further identify and develop actions to address the veterinarian shortage.
- February 28, 2023, was the first meeting of the VSWG. This organizational meeting reviewed the material from the dialogues and other sources, and established the intentions and plans for its work. In addition to the VSWG members, others were invited to participate in one of the four committees established to focus on the different stages of a veterinarian's career. The VSWG went on to meet three more times in 2023, with several more committee meetings as it worked to develop its final report. The material and resources identified and reviewed by the VSWG have been placed in a digital library for anyone to access at:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/196YISE3oIHn1YzDtBccnAUObIPZef8CS?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/196YISE3oIHn1YzDtBccnAUObIPZef8CS?usp=drive_link)
- During the 2023 legislative session of the Kentucky General Assembly, KBVE worked with Senator Jason Howell and Representative Matt Koch to pass House Bill 167, a complete modernization of the Kentucky Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, including a new program to offer educational awards to entice practitioners to work in veterinary shortage areas in the commonwealth.
- In May of 2023, AUCVM was awarded \$64,800 from the KADB for a two year preceptorship and externship program. AUCVM had a similar program funded by a USDA grant that ended in 2022. The match for the KADB funds were provided by

AUCVM and KVMA. Mr. Glen Sellers, director of the program, has worked closely with Kentucky veterinarians and agriculture leaders for several years. The purpose of the program is to aid in the recruitment and support of veterinarians in rural Kentucky. As part of the preceptorship program AUCVM senior students participate in an eight-week training experience to learn different aspects of practice management, finances, client relations, personnel supervision, and housekeeping under the direct supervision of a practicing veterinarian. The externship program is open to all students at AUCVM and give students a two-week hands-on training experience in a clinical practice environment.

- In the summer of 2023, AUCVM received a National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant from USDA to start the Auburn Veterinary Student Mentorship Program. Dr. Cris Young, Principal Investigator, from AUCVM, immediately went to the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association and partnered with them. KCA's Director of Education, Bradon Burks and Dr. Cris Young are leading this program designed exclusively for rising high school juniors or seniors that have a sincere desire to become a Food Animal Veterinarian. The identified applicants were ten high school upper-class students with strong academic credentials, emotional maturity, motivation, dedication, and ability to complete the veterinary medical curriculum. These students have been joined by seven third- and fourth-year college of veterinary medicine students to establish a mentoring relationship. The high school students are provided four different opportunities to meet and work alongside faculty from AUCVM as well as veterinarians from the KDA, and USDA APHIS Veterinary Services. With this program it not only educated the high school students on what to expect for veterinary school, but it also greatly helped with fostering a network between high schools and the veterinary school.
- On September 22, 2023, during the KVMA annual convention in Louisville at the Galt House Hotel the KVMA hosted its second open dialogue aimed at the rural veterinarian shortage and issues associated with it. Attended by more than 80 individuals, it included attendees from KVMA, KBVE, AUCVM, KDA, LMU, and many veterinarians. This meeting served as a great opportunity for discussion, proposed solutions, and garnered insight from all angles including private practice, industry groups, academia, and government.
- One of the duties of the State Veterinarian is to submit the recommendations for the USDA Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP). With the assistance of universities, industry, KVMA, and KBVE, the State Veterinarian identifies the shortage areas in Kentucky that may include counties, livestock species, and government positions. The recommendations are due each fall, in recent years Kentucky has been allocated five awards with all five awarded, the 2023 requests have been submitted, the awards are not complete at this time.
- The Kentucky General Assembly's, Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture met on October 19, 2023, with the entire meeting focused on the discussion of how to address

Kentucky's Veterinarian Shortage. Presentations were made by KDA, KBVE, KVMA, AUCVM, and Murray State University.

- The University of Kentucky and Kentucky Horse Council, with support from Morehead State University, Eastern Kentucky University and multiple industry partners, have announced an event for February 17, 2024, that will provide undergraduate students insight into the exciting field of veterinary medicine. Morning seminar topics will include pre-veterinary preparation and application information, current veterinary medicine issues, and exploration of the diversity of career opportunities available. A panel discussion with current veterinary professionals will debate functional ways of navigating industry concerns and conclude morning activities. The afternoon sessions will allow students to learn more about particular professional domains within veterinary medicine with focus areas including: Small/Companion Animal, Equine, Livestock, and Corporate/Government/Academic.

### **Attention on the National Level:**

On the national level, there has been recent action taken to bring awareness to the veterinarian shortage. Many expect the new Farm Bill in 2024 to address the veterinarian shortage issue. Some of the recent actions include:

On August 10, 2023, The U.S. Senate established a Veterinary Medicine Caucus for the first time in its history. The caucus will focus on increasing awareness toward veterinary-related matters in Congress, educating lawmakers and their staff about the challenges facing the profession, and advancing legislation that benefits the veterinary community.

This fall after months of collaborative work by the American Veterinary Medical Association, other stakeholder organizations, and congressional offices, the Rural Veterinary Workforce Act, was introduced in both the House and Senate in Washington DC. The Rural Veterinary Workforce Act would end the federal taxation on VMLRP awards, which would encourage more veterinarians to participate in a program that offers up to \$75,000 over three years for student loan repayment.

The Farm Journal Foundation (FJF) has been a great resource for Kentucky and the VSWG. In the spring of 2022, the FJF received a grant from the Zoetis Foundation to conduct a research study on veterinary shortages. That report completed by Clinton Neill, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in Veterinary Economics at the Cornell Center of Veterinary Business and Entrepreneurship, was provided to Congress in December of 2022. The report and support of the FJF staff was one of the main resources for the VSWG. The FJF has partnered with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and the KDA to raise awareness, education, and develop material to address the shortage. KDA has participated in the FJF solutions mapping working group which is developing the material and implementation strategy to address the rural veterinary shortage.

**Veterinary Shortage Working Group**  
Report on the Large and Food Animal Veterinarian Shortage  
Executive Summary

Over the past 18 months, Commissioner of Agriculture, Dr. Ryan F. Quarles has led efforts bringing together agricultural, commodity, and veterinarian stakeholders with the objective, to investigate the reasons behind the decline in access to rural veterinary care in Kentucky and propose effective solutions. Four working committees were formed, each focusing on specific time in a veterinarian's career. These committees worked to establish actions and benchmarks to reach specific goals and address the shortages of large and rural animal veterinarians.

**I. Cultivating Future Large Animal/Rural Veterinarians by Developing a Strong Pipeline of Kentucky Students to Veterinary School**

- a. Commence the veterinary recruitment pipeline at an earlier age and enhance robust educational programs within Kentucky's agricultural community. Educate primary and secondary school students, especially in rural communities, on veterinary medicine and associated animal medical and production careers in agriculture.
- b. Establish student awareness of the importance for strong academic preparation, especially in STEM disciplines, during secondary school (grades 7-12) for success as an undergraduate pre-veterinary student and subsequently in veterinary school.
- c. Support and prioritize academic rigor during secondary school (grades 7-12), to occur in parallel to their exposure to veterinary and associated animal medical and production careers in agriculture. This should include encouraging high school students to complete Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or college dual enrollment coursework.
- d. Encourage pre-veterinary advisors in Kentucky's colleges and universities to develop programs that allow prospective veterinary students to gain animal production experiences and exposure to rural veterinary practice.
- e. Offer personal finance training and mental health support programs to assist prospective veterinary students achieve basic financial literacy and develop strategies to maintain mental/emotional well-being and a healthy work-life balance.

**II. Bridging the Network by Developing Opportunities in Veterinary School**

- a. Create a team approach to develop, support, promote, and retain ongoing relationships between veterinary schools, their students, and Kentucky's agriculture industry.
- b. Assist in developing and funding preceptorship and externship programs to provide students with opportunities to work in rural Kentucky while attending veterinary school.
- c. Expand Kentucky's out of state veterinary school contract seat spaces at Auburn and other Colleges of Veterinary Medicine.



### **III. Kentucky's Role to Assist Students from Veterinary School to Rural and Large Animal Practice, Forging Sustainable Connections with Producers**

- a. Elevate rural community collaboration by establishing a network of key community and agricultural organizations in each county, district, or shared community region.
- b. Leverage local agricultural and community organizations to connect, educate, and support practitioners.
- c. Develop and support student loan debt repayment opportunities for new veterinary graduates.
- d. Leverage community partnerships to sustain large and food animal practices in rural areas.
- e. Register all veterinary facilities to track data regarding services offered and regions covered by each practice.
- f. Create centralized cooperative haul-in veterinary facility locations in key rural Kentucky communities.

### **IV. Sustainability for the Future of Rural Veterinary Medicine, Keeping Veterinarians in Rural and Large Animal Practices**

- a. Offer new business models for veterinarians and producers.
- b. Develop new financial support structures encouraging investment in sustainable rural veterinarian practices.
- c. Create a state-level educational loan forgiveness program like the Federal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program.

The Commissioner and all Veterinary Shortage Working Group contributors earnestly aspire to see this comprehensive report implemented to the best of Kentucky's capabilities. The group members are confident that the goals and achievements outlined in this report are within reach, and they believe that this collaborative effort will unite the veterinary community with commodity groups and producers, contributing to the development of a more robust and sustainable Kentucky for everyone.

---

**COMMITTEE ONE**  
**DEVELOPING A STRONG PIPELINE OF KENTUCKY**  
**STUDENTS TO VETERINARY SCHOOL**  
“Cultivating future large animal/rural veterinarians”

*Chair: Dr. Randall “Randy” Evans*

*Staff Liaison: Haley V. Buchanan*

*Members: Dr. Jamie MacLeod, Dave Maples, Laurie Mays, Sarah Coleman,  
Dr. Gordon Jones, Dr. Debbie Reed, and Dr. Cris Young*

---

### **Summary Statement**

This group shall strive to bridge the information gap between young students and veterinary medicine careers while trying to reduce the academic and financial barriers that prevent students from entering this career pathway with determination to keep all veterinary medicine minded students, especially the rural students, a top priority.

### **Background**

People often develop an initial curiosity and interest in the profession of veterinary medicine during childhood. For rural students in agricultural communities, the veterinary profession offers the opportunity to leverage a sincere love of animals and working on the farm with a rewarding career path that is valued and respected by society. Yet in today’s rural and agricultural communities, there is a profound shortage of veterinarians in clinical practice, especially for large and production animal species. This first section of the Veterinary Shortage Working Report focuses on the critical issues of developing, supporting, and preparing a strong pipeline of Kentucky students for success in veterinary school, with a special emphasis on students with rural and agricultural backgrounds.

Recommendations and strategies are presented to inform students in grade school about veterinary medicine and associated animal medical and production career opportunities. On an ongoing basis through high school and college, the veterinary-related interests of these students should be encouraged and supported through dedicated mentoring, well-informed academic advising, and optimized experiential learning opportunities – especially in areas of large and production animal species. The objective is to substantially expand the number of Kentucky students who are well informed about the exciting career opportunities in veterinary medicine, while simultaneously enhancing their academic, emotional, and experiential (animal agriculture) preparation for success.

### **Goals, Actions, Benchmarks**

#### **Goal #1**

Start the veterinary recruitment pipeline sooner and grow the strong Kentucky agricultural community programs for educating primary and secondary school students about veterinary medicine and agriculture.

## **Action**

Develop and secure funding for the appropriate modules for each strategic group and find the best methods for module delivery to industry and community stakeholders.

## **Benchmarks**

- Provide High School Guidance counselors the appropriate materials and encourage them to promote Veterinary Medicine as a career emphasizing the academic requirements for success in completing a veterinary medical college curriculum.
  - Expand the collaborative programs such as what AUCVM's Dr. Young and KCA's Bradon Burks has developed between veterinary school students and high school students.
- Provide guaranteed funding of undergraduate animal production units and Pre-veterinary Medicine Undergraduate Programs.
  - Support educational programs such as AgDiscovery Program at Kentucky State University.
  - Expand and fund Pre-Veterinary Medicine Experience Days with universities/colleges and veterinary industry leaders such as KVMA, KAEP, Kentucky Horse Council, Kentucky Cattleman Association, 4-H and FFA.
- Explore the development of a program similar to Iowa State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences called Production Animal – Veterinary Early Acceptance Program. This program's goal is to educate, recruit and retain more students that wish to practice production animal medicine.
- Outreach to home school networks.

## **Goal #2**

Financial literacy training and mental health support programs to reduce financial barriers and to assist in wellness.

## **Action - #1**

Create a Kentucky Pre-Veterinary Medicine Financial Literacy Guide similar to the University of Florida Veterinary Medicine Basic Financial Literacy Guide (For Pre-Veterinary Students).

## **Benchmarks**

- Understand veterinary college debt and personal finance.
- Understand veterinary college Cost of Attendance=Tuition + Cost of Living.
- Understand Total Cost of Attendance + Accrued Interest.
- Manage debt by:
  - Budgeting
  - Scholarships, grants, loans
  - Part-time work
  - Limiting pets that veterinary students are financially responsible during educational career.
  - Calculate future projected salary

### **Action - #2**

Enlist Kentucky veterinarians to offer financial guidance and support to aspiring veterinarians.

### **Benchmarks**

- Financially support aspiring veterinarians through paid internships with competitive pay and benefits at the practice and throughout the veterinary profession.
- Offer financial literacy training to future veterinarians.

### **Action - #3**

Encourage Pre-veterinary medical students to gain financial literacy skills by utilizing resources such as the AVMA “My Veterinary Life” website.

### **Benchmarks**

- Survey pre-veterinary medical students to assess financial literacy acumen.
- Inform students that Medical knowledge + Financial health = Successful Career.
- Advise students that financial decisions made during undergraduate and veterinary school will affect financial health and life satisfaction in the future.
- Promote the available grants, funding, scholarships, and all financial resources to interested students at various stages of their educational career.

### **Action - #4**

Provide mental health support programs throughout academic career.

### **Benchmarks**

- Increase awareness and decrease stigma of these programs.
- Offer free mental health screenings.
- Include well-being practices in coursework and student activities.
- Increase accessibility of mental health counseling to 24/7.

---

**COMMITTEE TWO**  
**OPPORTUNITIES IN VETERINARY SCHOOL,**  
**WHAT SHOULD KENTUCKY FOCUS ON TO ASSIST**

“Bridging the Network”

*Chair: Bradon Burks*

*Staff Liaison: Keith L. Rogers*

*Members: Dr. Fernanda Camargo, Dr. Tim Gardner, Becky Gilpatrick,  
Dr. Pedro DePedro, and Dr. Robert Stout*

---

## **Summary Statement**

Strive to help broaden and build the relationships between veterinary schools, their students, and Kentucky agriculture through various means of outreach and support through various partnerships that establish long-lasting relationships while supporting students during veterinary school and recruiting them to work in rural Kentucky after graduation.

## **Background**

Following acceptance into a college of veterinary medicine (CVM), individuals begin their nine-semester journey through an intense veterinary medicine academic program. Providing support during their tenure as students becomes a vital factor in their success. This is particularly true for students with an interest or desire to launch their career in rural or large animal work. Veterinary students in AVMA Council on Education (COE) accredited schools receive training in all animal species. However, the job offers extended upon graduation are most frequently from small animal private and corporate practices. To best ensure an adequate supply of new veterinarians are entering into large animal and rural practice, we need to connect students with opportunities in large animal and rural practices prior to graduation.

Recruitment should also begin while individuals are still in their academic programs. Part of the recruitment strategy must be consideration of access to housing during any extern or preceptorship. Students cite access to housing as a key component of their consideration on where to spend this portion of their education.

## **Goals, Actions, Benchmarks**

### **Goal - #1**

For Kentucky’s agricultural leadership and organizations to create a team approach to develop, support, and retain an ongoing relationship with veterinary schools. Promote the school’s student chapters and its students while seizing the opportunity to showcase Kentucky agriculture and the vast opportunities and careers in rural large animal care that lie waiting in Kentucky.

### **Action**

Build and maintain relationships within the veterinary student community, to include the students, parents, and faculty.

## **Benchmarks**

- Inform students of the opportunities that Kentucky has to offer through the means of having networking opportunities for students and industry partners.
- Offer trade and career events to advocate for Kentucky agriculture and recruit interest in related careers.
- Establish collegiate programs that correlate with current groups that will help connect interested students with rural Kentucky while helping to better prepare students for a career as large animal and rural veterinarian.
- Develop a mentorship program for current university pre-vet advisors that assists them in better understanding Kentucky agriculture and the opportunities for rural veterinarians so they can better equip potential students.

## **Goal - #2**

Kentucky's agricultural leadership and organizations will assist in the development and funding for preceptorships and externships programs to provide students an opportunity to work in rural Kentucky during veterinary school.

## **Action - #1**

Analyze current preceptorship and externship programs for the positive impact on Kentucky agriculture and then work with veterinary schools to expand the opportunities available to veterinary students in rural Kentucky.

## **Benchmarks**

- Identify the individuals and organizations in Kentucky agriculture to lead this effort.
- Build upon the AUCVM program recently funded by the KADB, and match from KVMA.
- Identify the areas in Kentucky that have an interest in long-term recruitment of a rural veterinarian and help design a program that includes preceptorships and externships for students that target that community.
- Engage local communities interested in long-term recruitment of rural veterinarians to identify the steps they may take to secure an interested veterinary student. Such as assistance in housing, engagement in the community, and possible financial support.

## **Action - #2**

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Office of State Veterinarian, will actively recruit interns from veterinary schools and under graduate students interested in veterinary school for its summer internship program.

## **Benchmarks**

- KDA will work with AUCVM and LMU to identify Kentucky students currently enrolled in veterinary schools interested in regulatory medicine and actively recruit them.

- KDA will work with pre-vet advisors at universities and colleges in Kentucky to identify students with an interest in veterinary school and potential regulatory medicine careers and provide them information about the KDA internship program.

### **Goal - #3**

Build on to our preexisting relationship at AUCVM to expand the number of state supported student positions while at the same time exploring opportunities with other veterinary schools for similar positions for Kentucky students.

### **Action - #1**

Strengthen and increase funding for new positions at AUCVM.

### **Benchmark**

- Work with Kentucky's General Assembly and Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority to pursue additional funding and positions.

### **Action - #2**

Explore and evaluate the opportunities with other veterinary schools to create new partnerships with potential state supported veterinary student positions.

### **Benchmark**

- Identify a team of veterinarian and agriculture leaders to focus on this task.

### **Action - #3**

Identify and evaluate the current opportunities at undergraduate universities that are offering pre-vet programs.

### **Benchmarks**

- Identify all Kentucky undergraduate schools that offer a pre-vet program.
- Evaluate the recent graduates that entered a veterinary school from these pre-vet programs and their area of focus.
- Meet with pre-vet advisors and faculty to explore what can be done to create interest in rural, large or food animal veterinarian careers.
- Develop a program to educate pre-vet advisors and faculty on the opportunities and programs that Kentucky has and how they benefit veterinary students that wish to practice in rural areas.
- With the assistance of the pre-vet advisors and faculty, offer workshops to expose pre-vet students to careers and opportunities in rural, large and food animal practice.

---

**COMMITTEE THREE**  
**FROM VETERINARY SCHOOL TO RURAL AND LARGE ANIMAL PRACTICE,**  
**KENTUCKY’S ROLE**

*Chair: Glen Sellers*

*Staff Liaison: Michelle Shane*

*Members: Dr. Chance Armstrong, Dustin Blosser, Sharon Furches,  
Todd Greenwood, Dr. John Laster, Dennis Liptrap, Dr. Andy Roberts,  
Dr. Charles Townsend and Dr. R. Steve Velasco III*

---

## **Summary Statement**

Assisting new graduate veterinarians with connecting with and transitioning to working with rural and large animal producers, and veterinarians in Kentucky.

## **Background**

Rural food animal veterinarians are needed to ensure the health and safety of the nation’s food supply and are imperative to protecting against animal diseases. Rural food animal veterinarians possess the knowledge and skills to improve, protect, and sustain the agricultural economy of the United States, yet these food animal veterinarians comprise only 5% of the veterinary profession. The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has identified 47 states experiencing a “veterinarian shortage situation.” The physical demands of food animal work the long hours, student debt, quality of life concerns, lack of mentorship, and practice profitability and sustainability in rural areas contribute to the rural veterinary shortage.

Furthermore, rural veterinary practice for all species is in decline. Many new graduates bypass rural communities for work in urban areas where they can make a larger salary and often receive significant sign-on bonuses. Since veterinary students today graduate with an average of \$250,000 in debt, a graduate’s ability to pay back their student loans is paramount in considering employment opportunities.

Increasing the number of rural food animal and rural practitioners by assisting new graduate veterinarians with connecting and transitioning to working with rural and large animal veterinarians and producers in Kentucky will require the entire community’s effort, including animal owners, producers, schools, government officials, and industry leaders.

## **Goals, Actions, Benchmarks**

### **Goal #1**

Rural Community Involvement at the local level – Outreach to the local community is critical in affecting change. Buy-in is necessary from local officials and community leaders to ensure awareness and promotion of the critical veterinary shortage issue. (See additional considerations in Appendix.) Key community influencers include:



- State Senators and Representatives in their various districts
- County judge executives and magistrates
- Local elected officials
- Area Development Districts (ADDs)
- County Agriculture Development Boards
- County Agricultural Development Councils
- Community banks, and agricultural businesses, and civic organizations.

### **Action - #1**

Identify the key community organization points of contact (POCs) in each county, district, or shared community region.

### **Benchmarks**

- Develop a complete list of community POCs for each region and their contact information.
- Number of community POCs that have been contacted in each county or region.
- Number of counties or regions where this has occurred.

### **Action - #2**

Outreach to community POCs to build relationships.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of one-on-one or group meetings reaching each community POC to identify local needs and existing resources.
- Number of action items created with each community group.
- Number of implemented action items completed with each community group.

### **Goal #2**

Role of Local Agricultural Organizations – Agricultural organizations and their members are powerful resources for producers and their communities. Establishing relationships with these organizations at the local level is an essential element of success in fostering programs to entice veterinarians to stay in the community. (See additional considerations in Appendix.) Key agricultural organizations include:

- UK Extension Offices and Extension Agents
- Farmer touch points, including equipment companies, fertilizer companies, nutrition companies, wholesaler distributors, drug suppliers, etc.
- Commodity Groups
  - Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) and its county Farm Bureaus
  - Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association (KCA)
  - Kentucky Pork Producers Association (KPPA)
  - Many others (see [Kentucky Agricultural Council](#) Member Organizations)

- Species-specific groups who are talking to producers
  - Consignors
  - Breed Associations
  - Stockyards / Livestock Sales Barns
  - Keeneland
  - Fasig-Tipton
- Kentucky State Fair
- Kentucky 4-H and Kentucky FFA

### **Action - #1**

Identify the key agricultural organization points of contact (POCs) in each county, district, or shared community region.

### **Benchmarks**

- Develop a complete list of agricultural organization POCs for each region and their contact information.
- Number of agricultural organization POCs contacted in each county or region
- Number of counties or regions where this has occurred.

### **Action - #2**

Outreach to agricultural organization POCs to build relationships and help them understand the value of building and maintaining relationships with veterinarians.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of one-on-one or group meetings reaching each agricultural organization POC to identify local needs and existing resources.
- Number of action items created with each agricultural organization.
- Number of implemented action items completed with each agricultural organization.
- Number of agricultural organizations that send educational materials on the veterinary shortage issue to their membership.

### **Action - #3**

Leverage state and local agricultural organization meetings to connect with their membership.

### **Benchmarks**

- Identify local community events that touch on agriculture or veterinary medicine.
- Number of local meetings at which exhibited or presented about the ties between veterinarians and animal producers.

### **Goal #3**

Leverage local veterinary organizations and meetings – Both federal and state law require that a relationship exists between a veterinarian and their client in order to provide diagnosis and prescriptions. This relationship is called the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) and must be renewed with an in-person visit at least once every 12 months.

There are many established veterinary organizations at the state and local level which hold periodic meetings where communities may develop relationships with veterinarians. Keeping veterinarians informed of the needs of the community is a vital step to ensuring the profession is aware of the community's needs. Key veterinarian organizations and meetings include:

- Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association (KVMA) and its local chapters
- American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP)
- Kentucky Association of Equine Practitioners (KAEP)
- American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (AASRP)
- Colleges of Veterinary Medicine (CVMs)
  - Auburn
  - Lincoln Memorial University
  - Tuskegee
- UK Summer Food Animal Conference
- UK Winter Food Animal Conference
- Buffalo Trace VMA Morehead Clinic Days
- Others

### **Action - #1**

Identify the key veterinarian organizations and meetings points of contact (POCs) in each county, district, or shared community region.

### **Benchmarks**

- Develop a complete list of veterinarian organizations and meetings POCs for each region and their contact information.
- Number of veterinarian organizations and meetings POCs that have been contacted in each county or region.
- Number of counties or regions where this has occurred.

### **Action - #2**

Coordinate meet-and-greets between community veterinarians and agricultural groups to encourage relationship-building.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of community events bringing together producers and veterinarians.
- Number of participating veterinarians.

- Number of participating producers.
- Number of participating CVM students.

## Goal #4

Student Loan Debt Support / Repayment – A factor in a new graduate’s decision about where to work is the amount of student loan debt they carry. In the past, recent graduates would purchase shares in an established veterinary business and become a part of an existing community. Today, student loan debt makes it more difficult for many newly licensed veterinarians. Creating and leveraging programs for new graduates to offset or forgive their student loans will open up more options for these veterinarians, including working in rural areas and in food animal medicine. Debt support programs will encourage and enable them to buy into local veterinary practices so that they stay in the community.

There are both federal and state-level programs that address this issue. For example, in 2022 the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy modified their loan program to make loans easier and more accessible to veterinarians. However, students and new graduates often need county support to complete the application processes. Some critical organizations and programs include:

- Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy (KOAP)
  - **Large and Food Animal Veterinary Incentives Program**  
Provides funding for Kentucky veterinarians to increase service to large and food animals in the state. Applicants may receive up to 75 percent reimbursement for eligible expenditures not to exceed more than \$100,000 in state and county funds as a lifetime limit.
- Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC)
  - **Large/Food Animal Veterinary Loan Program (LFAVLP)**  
Designed to assist individuals licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Kentucky who desire to construct, expand, equip, or buy into a practice serving large animal producers, including goat, sheep, swine, and other food animals.
- Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners (KBVE)
  - **Educational Awards Program**  
Established in KRS 321.235, this program is currently under development. Following the passage of administrative regulations governing the program, contract awards of \$10,000 - \$25,000 will be offered to veterinarians willing to work in veterinary shortage areas in Kentucky.
- USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
  - **Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)**  
Nationally competitive opportunity for qualified veterinarians to reduce their educational debt by agreeing to provide professional veterinary services for three years in designated, high priority, veterinary food supply shortage situations throughout the US and its insular areas. NIFA releases a Federal Register Notice soliciting nominations for veterinary shortage situations from

all State Animal Health Officials and appropriate Federal Animal Health Official(s). This is a highly competitive application.

### **Action - #1**

Educate community POCs and agricultural organization POCs about the need for their involvement in the application processes and how their match counts toward attracting and maintaining veterinarian services in the local area.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of POC meetings held.
- Number of community and agricultural organizations that agree to participate and support veterinarians.

### **Action - #2**

Assist veterinarians with applications for loan and repayment programs.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of veterinarians assisted.
- Number of applications completed within loan and repayment programs.
- Number of active veterinarian recipients participating in loan and repayment programs.

### **Goal #5**

Leverage partnerships to improve veterinary business success in rural areas. The traditional way of operating a veterinary practice solely focused on food and large animal medicine is not sustainable in modern society. New graduate veterinarians are demanding a better work-life balance and not to be on call 24/7. The pricing structure for food animal services makes it challenging to individually sustain businesses dedicated to only food animal species. Just as many Kentucky farming operations are managed by producers who work off the farm, many veterinarians need to incorporate mixed animal practice to sustain themselves in rural communities. Leveraging partnerships to create sustainable large and food animal work in rural areas is essential to ensuring access to veterinary services for rural communities.

### **Action - #1**

Coordinate partnerships between key organizations to fund continued work with Auburn University on a specialized version of the Auburn College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) Veterinary Practice Management Group (VPMG) program focusing on food animal work in Kentucky. (See more information in Appendix)

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of organizations in partnership.
- Amount of funding available.

- Number of years VPMG program offered.

### **Action - #2**

Implement the Veterinary Practice Management Group (VPMG) food animal program in rural Kentucky.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of CVM students participating in externships (2-week experience).
- Number of CVM students participating in preceptorships (8-week experience).
- Number of practices that participated in VPMG assessments.

### **Action - #3**

Encourage the development of employment relationships following CVM student graduation.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of CVM students offered rural jobs following graduation.
- Number of CVM students accepting rural jobs following graduation.
- Number of the CVM students that accepted rural jobs who are still in a rural or large animal practice after 5 and 10 years.

### **Goal #6**

Veterinary facility registrations – A key factor in understanding shortages is having good data on available services to inform decisions about programming. In 2023, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a modernized Kentucky Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, KRS Chapter 321, under the governing authority of the Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners (KBVE). One of the new programs in the updated Act is a requirement for all veterinary facilities to register with the KBVE. Requiring registration for all veterinary facilities in Kentucky will allow the licensing agency to collect and maintain current information on critical metrics related to veterinary shortage areas. KBVE shall gather metrics that will inform the General Assembly, commodity groups, and constituents about regional veterinary services, including counties served, species served, services offered, number of mobile units, etc. All veterinary facilities shall be registered no later than June 30, 2025.

### **Action**

Veterinarian facility registrations.

### **Benchmark**

- Number of registered veterinary facilities in rural areas.
- Number of registered veterinary facilities in veterinary shortage service areas.
- Number of registered veterinary mobile units serving rural areas.
- Number of facilities that offer services to food animal species.

## **Goal #7**

Build Centralized Haul-in Veterinary Facility Locations in Key Rural Communities – Business models need to change. Veterinarians entering rural practice face the challenge of ensuring they have the right equipment and enough resources, while obtaining enough business to support their work in the community. To sustain their business in rural areas, veterinarian business models have shifted from veterinarians specializing in only food animal ambulatory practice to mixed animal practice in fixed facility locations. Often, mixed practices require their food animal clients to haul-in animals for veterinary services. As business models shift, it is important to consider new and innovative ways to offer a veterinarian enough business to sustain their community services. (See additional considerations in Appendix.)

### **Action - #1**

Form cooperatives amongst farmers for shared veterinary services on a sustainable contract.

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of producers participating in the cooperative.
- Number of cooperatives.
- Number of participating veterinarians.

### **Action - #2**

Build centralized fixed veterinary facility locations in key rural communities for producers to haul-in livestock (less hauling distance and less fuel costs)

### **Benchmarks**

- Number of producers served by a central veterinary facility.
- Number of central veterinary facilities.
- Number of participating veterinarians.

## **Appendix:**

### **Goal #1 & #2 - Important Notes for Consideration:**

- Sustainability. Consider how to handle elements of turnover, changes related to elected personnel, retirements, etc.
- Obstacles. In discussions with POCs, learn more about community obstacles and areas of resistance.

### **Goal #5 - Important Background Notes on Auburn University CVM's program:**

Cooperation between Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine (AUCVM), Kentucky Veterinary Medical Assoc. (KVMA), and the Kentucky Ag Development Board (KADB).

The recruitment and support of veterinarians in underserved areas of Kentucky are critical to maintaining the infrastructure necessary for agricultural endeavors to flourish and ensure a safe and wholesome food supply. Auburn University, KVMA, and the KY Ag Development Board seek to support current veterinarians by facilitating professional relationships and purposefully recruiting interested graduating veterinarians through strategic and timely networking. The proposed activities directly and strategically develop, implement, and sustain veterinary services and facilitate the relief of veterinary shortage situations in Kentucky. This is a collaborative effort between the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine (AUCVM), the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), the Kentucky Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV), the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association (KVMA), and various rural veterinary practitioners throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This collaborative effort will bring veterinary students to work in rural practices in Kentucky through the AUCVM extern and preceptorship programs. Additionally, The Auburn University Practice Management rotation will engage in practice assessments with veterinary students to seek ways to increase rural practice profitability and efficiency.

The AUCVM's preceptorship program is a longstanding capstone educational experience for veterinary students. The preceptorship program has allowed students to obtain in-depth knowledge and engagement from practicing veterinarians. The preceptorship program is an eight-week training experience in a viable clinical practice situation under the direct supervision of a practicing veterinarian. The program's primary objectives are to acquaint senior veterinary students with the scope and pace of clinical practice and to teach students aspects of management, finances, client relations, personnel supervision, and housekeeping, as can best be found in a practice situation. The AUCVM currently has 347 active preceptor locations, with 56 located within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

In addition, AUCVM assists students interested in externship opportunities. These externships offer students a two-week training experience in a clinical practice environment under the direct supervision of a practicing veterinarian. These externships provide students in all years of the curriculum (vs. preceptorships being restricted to the end of the senior year) with a hands-on, realistic view of clinical veterinary practice in rural areas.

The AUCVM offers the Veterinary Practice Management rotations to veterinary students in the fourth year of the veterinary curriculum. The Veterinary Practice Management rotation, also referred to as the Veterinary Practice Management Group (VPMG), encompasses the study, understanding, and application of pertinent business disciplines guiding the veterinary clinical leadership team's decision-making responsibilities that seek to improve profitability and efficiency, allowing for a competitive advantage and long-term sustainability.

Listed proposal objectives:

- Connect veterinarians with AUCVM veterinary students.
- Provide quality educational opportunities for veterinary students in business management and sustainability in veterinary practice.



- Provide business management education and practice sustainability consultation.
- Provide written assessment reports to participating practices.
- Facilitate a capstone educational experience in rural underserved areas for students interested in working with target species via preceptorship and externship opportunities.
- Enable skilled clinical students to assist veterinarians with providing veterinary care in underserved areas via preceptorship and externship opportunities.
- Facilitate and create networking opportunities that assist graduating veterinarians in transitioning into sustainable careers.

A similar project supported by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and executed by the AUCVM from the fall of 2017 to the summer of 2022 was highly successful in supporting activities to assist veterinarians serving in underserved rural Kentucky and 40 AUCVM students (20 preceptor students and 20 externship students) in gaining invaluable experience and transitioning into sustainable careers in underserved rural areas. The first and second-year student externship training connected students with rural practitioners and began educating students on rural veterinary practice. The externship training prepares early veterinary students for a successful preceptorship experience and transition into a productive career in rural veterinary practice. The USDA supported fourth-year veterinary student preceptee training connected and assisted 95% of those preceptorship students with securing jobs in rural mixed animal practices after graduation.

Additionally, this USDA grant provided funding for multiple veterinary students and rural practice owners to learn from a business consultant focused on rural veterinary business (the Practice Management Director) through the process of completing an in-depth, on-site practice assessment report. The AUCVM VMPPG visited 26 veterinary practices and completed 23 on-site assessments. Each on-site practice assessment culminated with a debriefing with the rural clinic owner, where students confidentially discussed the assessment results.

Summary thoughts:

- Having the students come into practices has been a huge benefit
- Need a list of preceptors to communicate about shortage areas
- High rate of job offers following preceptorships

**Goal #7 – Important considerations regarding shared veterinary facility**

- Cooperative to buy goods at a discounted price
- Funding for build / ownership of facility
- Liability for injury on property
- Could a community foundation (4-H, extension, etc.) take on this project?
- Producer legacy and sustaining contribution
- Disease management considerations

---

**COMMITTEE FOUR**  
**KEEPING VETERINARIANS IN RURAL AND LARGE ANIMAL PRACTICE, WHAT CAN  
THIS WORKING GROUP DO**

“Sustainability for the future of rural veterinary practice”

*Chair: Caleb Ragland*

*Staff Liaison: Debra Hamelback*

*Members: Dr. Beth Johnson, Aaron Miller, Mark Reding, and Dr. Andrea Sexten*

---

## **Summary Statement**

From financial support to relationship building, this committee looked at how to keep veterinarians both short and long-term in rural areas of Kentucky. Additionally, customize this report to benefit the veterinarian and producer to ensure the health and well-being of their livestock. Lastly, this report creates a sustainable plan to allow veterinarians to make a livable wage while meeting the needs of food-animal producers and livestock, while reviewing other states’ student loan repayment programs.

## **Background**

One element of sustainable practice is profitability. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), in 2022 the average student debt (excluding graduates who got through their schooling without taking out any educational loans), the average debt balance for those who did have loans was \$179,505. Rural and large animal practitioners in Kentucky cannot expect a starting annual salary of more than \$80,000. Given this income ratio to debt balance, Kentucky needs to focus on ways of mitigating the cost of education. This is especially true if we want students to buy into rural practices and remain long term in rural communities.

## **Goals, Actions, Benchmarks**

### **Goal #1**

From Veterinarian to Producer – Collaborating for Partnership

### **Action**

Business models that benefit both farmers and veterinarians.

### **Benchmarks**

- View the veterinarian as a consultant, being a partner for success.
- Create an animal health plan dependent on the size of herd and veterinary needs.
  - Set up a retainer for one year.
  - Establish veterinarian-client-patient-relationship with yearly herd assessment.
  - Create model to include emergency calls, farm calls, and product inventory.
  - Establish what the veterinary clinics LVT may be able to do to assist with animal health needs.

- Purchasing - buying group aspect from multiple producers to veterinarian to take advantage of discounts by manufacturers and distributors.
- Haul in cattle/ livestock to reduce costs and drive time for DVM.
- Explore contracted state regional veterinary hubs – Team of Vets – Specialties/ Relational – identify areas of need.
  - 2 persons per species – Cattle/Small Ruminant/ Poultry/ Pork
    - Eastern Hub
    - Western Hub
    - Central Hub
  - Be mindful of safety for DVM’s when traveling to rural areas for late night calls.

## Goal #2

Financial support possibilities.

### Actions:

Expanding business support for rural and startup veterinarian clinics.

### Benchmarks:

- [Review the KSFTC \(KY Selling Farmer Tax Credit\)](#) program and inquire if this can be developed for rural independent existing clinics to sell to younger DVM’s for ownership.
  - Retiring Vet to get a tax break to sell his practice to sell to a younger DVM.
- **KY Agriculture Finance Corporation**
  - [LARGE/FOOD ANIMAL VETERINARY LOAN PROGRAM \(LFAVLP\)](#) is designed to assist individuals licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Kentucky who desire to construct, expand, equip, or buy into a practice serving large animal producers, including goat, sheep, swine, and other food animals. Loan up to \$250,000 at a 2.75% rate, able to borrow up to 50% of student loan debt.
  - “The Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC) established the Large Animal Veterinary Loan Program (LAVLP) with the following purpose: to assist individuals licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Kentucky who desire to construct, expand, equip or buy into a practice serving large animal producers. This program substantially reduces the interest expenses associated with the acquisition, establishment, and/or renovation of capital assets needed by veterinarians with limited resources who want to serve Kentucky farmers. Furthermore, the LAVLP encourages lenders to structure loans in participation with the KAFC that may carry a higher level of risk due to the applicant’s prior education related debt.”

- **KY Agriculture Development Fund**
  - [LARGE AND FOOD ANIMAL VETERINARY INCENTIVES PROGRAM](#) -Large and Food Animal Veterinary Incentives Program provides funding for Kentucky veterinarians to increase service to large and food animals in the state. Applicants may receive up to 75 percent reimbursement for eligible expenditures not to exceed more than \$100,000 in state and county funds as a lifetime limit.
- **CAIP – Program -County Agriculture Investment Program**
  - CAIP provides Kentucky agricultural producers with cost-share assistance on practices to allow them to improve and diversify their current farm operations. CAIP covers a wide variety of agricultural enterprises in its 11 investment areas, including, but not limited to, bees and honey, equine, forage, beef and dairy cattle, goats and sheep, horticulture, poultry, swine, timber, and technology, as well as energy efficiency and production, farm infrastructure and water enhancement, marketing, and value-added production.
- **County Extension Office**
- **Kentucky Farm Bureau**
- **Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association**
- **Kentucky Poultry Federation**
- **Kentucky Pork Producers Association**
- **Local government and Chamber of Commerce**
- **Economic Development Authority**
- **Regional Stockyard Support**
- **State Funded Rural Vet Clinics** in areas where there are no veterinarians.
- **State Contract** – work at this facility that is built – haul in and out.

### **Goal #3**

Review Veterinary contract seats.

### **Benchmarks**

- Auburn CVM – 38 seats per year – 152 seats total for 4 years.
  - [Auburn CVM Contract Seats – Full report and history](#)
- Tuskegee CVM – 3 seats per year – 12 seats total for 4 years.
  - Tuskegee has been filling only 50% of their seats for the past 5 years.
- [Veterinary Working Group Report – 2018](#)
- Possibility of expanding veterinary contract seats.
  - Georgia CVM – 10 seats per year available starting in Fall of 2024 dependent on KY legislation.
    - [Georgia CVM Contract Seat Proposal and Information](#)
  - Lincoln Memorial University – not available through SREB at this time.
    - [LMU CVM Contract Seat Proposal and Information](#)

## Goal #4

Create a Kentucky veterinary medicine loan repayment program.

### Action:

Incentivize through student loan forgiveness, encouraging graduates to return to rural areas.

### Benchmarks

- **Currently the only student loan forgiveness is the USDA's VMLRP. (Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program) Kentucky is awarded 2-3 per year.**
  - Provides participating veterinarians up to \$25,000 a year for student loan repayment in exchange for their service in one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) designated rural veterinary shortage areas. The USDA declared 237 shortage areas in 47 states for 2023—the highest total ever recorded.
  - Legislation on the national level titled Rural Veterinary Workforce Act will eliminate the federal taxation of VMLRP loans. Also addresses the challenges that ranchers and farmers in rural communities' face in obtaining essential veterinary services.
- **Design a student loan forgiveness program based off successful models in the following states.**
  - [Summary of state funded veterinary student loan forgiveness programs.](#)
    - [2023 update from AVMA on state funded student loan forgiveness programs.](#)
  - [Iowa – Rural Iowa Veterinary Loan Repayment Program \(RIVLRP\)](#)
    - 2021 - **\$300,000** in state funding
      - 41 applicants
      - 5 awards of up to \$60,000 each (\$15,000/yr. @ 4 years)
    - 2022- **\$400,000**
      - 30 applicants
      - 6 awards of up to \$60,000 each (\$15,000/yr. @ 4 years)
    - 2023 – **\$700,000 + \$40,000** (from previous balance)
      - 28 applicants
      - 13 awards of up to \$60,000 each (\$15,000/yr. @ 4 years)
      - **Average federal student loan debt of recipients: \$130,432**
  - [Kansas – Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas \(VTPRK\)](#)
    - VTPRK was established in 2006 to provide financial incentive to veterinary graduates to practice in rural Kansas.
    - If selected, receive a 4-year scholarship of \$25,000 each year for a minimum of 5 years.
  - [Missouri – Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program.](#)
    - **Available up to 12 veterinary students each year.**
      - For each year of obligated services, the department may pay up to \$30,000 for each academic year on behalf of the individual for loans not to exceed \$120,000. Students must remain in good standing.
  - [Hawaii – Student Debt Relief Program](#)
  - [Minnesota – Rural Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program](#)

## Appendix (Links referenced are active as of December 20, 2023)

- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (2023) The KY Selling Farmer Tax Credit <https://ced.ky.gov/Entrepreneurship/KSFTC#:~:text=Farmers%20wanting%20to%20sell%20agri cultural,and%20a%20%24100%2C000%20lifetime%20cap.>
- The Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (2023) Large/Food Animal Veterinary Loan Program [https://www.kyagr.com/agpolicy/documents/AFC\\_Loans\\_guidelines\\_vet.pdf](https://www.kyagr.com/agpolicy/documents/AFC_Loans_guidelines_vet.pdf)
- The Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (2023) Large/Food Animal Veterinary Incentives Program <https://www.kyagr.com/agpolicy/Kentucky-Agricultural-Development-Fund-Applicants.html>
- The Auburn CVM contract seats report and history (2023) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Ab3dd263d-fbf8-3ad3-a4db-f89ea70718b7>
- Veterinary Contract Space Working Group Report (2018) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A243b81a2-69ea-3e37-9c6c-2eb99ab2234f>
- Georgia CVM Contract Seat Proposal to Kentucky <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A80bf307c-dc60-3c35-a826-9051e59b6618>
- Lincoln Memorial University Contract Seat Proposal to Kentucky (2023) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A9b9ee5c7-b009-3588-8d83-cd8f041f8166>
- Summary of state funded veterinary student loan forgiveness programs <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A2cc59719-ca52-32e4-b71b-849901220773>
- 2023 Update from AVMA on state funded student loan forgiveness programs <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Aa7d369a9-8b02-3a44-a97d-bd019218c21b>
- Iowa Rural Veterinary Repayment Program (2022) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A00f484c9-7537-32fe-8529-4c50442888e8>
- Kansas Veterinary Training Program for rural Kansas <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3A19fd8073-8173-319d-aa6a-e53e42bcb6cd>
- Missouri Large Animal Student Loan Program <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:da206d12-cd4e-3fab-af20-b9986a58f89f>
- Hawaii Student Debt Relief Program <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Ae5fe332a-1aeb-3ab0-8ff2-e94d8e188b9f>
- Minnesota Rural Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2329>