



FFAR NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FFAR Funds Veterinary Research to Address Pandemic Diseases

WASHINGTON D.C. (April 8, 2020) – In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) is funding five additional [Vet Fellowships](#) to conduct pandemic and zoonotic research. The FFAR Vet Fellows program equips veterinary students with the expertise to address future agricultural challenges.

Up to 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, meaning a pathogen can spread from animals to humans. Both coronaviruses and influenza viruses can be zoonotic and can be found in agricultural animals such as poultry and pigs. Research on food-animal production and veterinary medicine can reduce the threat of zoonotic pathogens. Yet, veterinary students have limited opportunities to research zoonotic diseases in agriculture.

“The coronavirus is an example of how pathogens can move between humans and animals,” said FFAR’s Executive Director [Sally Rockey](#). “Understanding new diseases in animals, and especially how they spread, is vital to slowing transmission and developing remedies. FFAR is expanding the Vet Fellows to assure we have the expertise in the veterinary community to address what could be future pandemics.”

A recent [JAVMA](#) article agrees that veterinarians are needed in the research field to be part of the solution. FFAR is ensuring that the future scientific workforce includes veterinarians with expertise in zoonotic pathogens by funding five additional Vet Fellowships to conduct research on pathogens that threaten agricultural productivity and human health. To bolster the scientific workforce in response to the coronavirus, FFAR is not requiring the 2020 Vet Fellows to secure matching funds. Additionally, FFAR and the [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges](#) (AAVMC), who partners with FFAR to administer the program, extended the nomination deadline to May 6, 2020.

The FFAR Vet Fellows program will still support ten students to conduct research on agricultural productivity, public health and environmental sustainability. Information about applying for the FFAR Vet Fellows Program is available on [FFAR's website](#). The fifteen 2020 FFAR Vet Fellows will be announced in summer 2020.

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Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research

The [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization originally established by bipartisan Congressional support in the 2014 Farm Bill, builds unique partnerships to support innovative and actionable science addressing today's

food and agriculture challenges. FFAR leverages public and private resources to increase the scientific and technological research, innovation, and partnerships critical to enhancing sustainable production of nutritious food for a growing global population. The FFAR Board of Directors is chaired by Mississippi State University President Mark Keenum, Ph.D., and includes ex officio representation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation.

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AAVMC

The member institutions of the [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges](#)(AAVMC) promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, animals and the environment by advancing the profession of veterinary medicine and preparing new generations of veterinarians to meet the evolving needs of a changing world. Founded in 1966, the AAVMC member institutions include 53 Council on Education (COE) accredited veterinary medical colleges and schools in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand and 23 provisional and collaborating members, departments of veterinary science and departments of comparative medicine in the U.S.