

# »» Maintain the Federal Research Enterprise

We must invest in innovation, research and development to maintain America's competitive edge. Laboratories in our nation's colleges of veterinary medicine provide critical support for the National Institutes of Health, United States Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation and other agencies.



The federal research enterprise plays a crucial role in our economy and fosters American strength and prosperity. Agricultural and biomedical research helps the United States create the most abundant, safest food supply in the world and protects the health and wellbeing of our citizens. The AAVMC supports the following appropriations levels:

- At the National Institutes of Health (NIH), we believe the implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act must continue. The biomedical research conducted at NIH can literally change lives, and we are now on the edge of tremendous new discoveries that could result in treatments or cures for diseases like Alzheimers, Parkinsons, cancer and other disorders. We support a final funding level of \$41.6 billion for FY 2020, a 6.4 percent increase over FY 2019.

- At the Agriculture and Food Research Institute (AFRI), we continue to need new discoveries in animal diseases, food safety, and antimicrobial resistance, among many other areas of research. To meet these needs, and to further invest in research around antimicrobial resistant bacteria, we support a funding level of \$445 million for FY 2020, an increase of \$30 million above FY 2019.
- The Agriculture Research Service (ARS) is the largest component of the USDA research portfolio. ARS performs critical research into vaccine development, diagnostics, transboundary diseases, foreign animal diseases, animal and plant genetics, and organics. All are crucial in the protection of U.S. agriculture and the U.S. economy. To sustain ARS, we support a final funding level of \$1.5 billion for FY 2020.

- We support a return to regular order for appropriations bills each fiscal year.
- We support a bipartisan agreement raising the budget caps, and hope that this puts the appropriations process for FY 2020 and FY 2021 back on track.
- We oppose the tremendous cuts in the research enterprise envisioned by the Administration's past budget requests.

# »» Support VMLRP & VSGP

## Support the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP)

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has long recognized the need to attract food animal and mixed practice veterinarians to underserved areas, where much of our livestock is produced.



### VMLRP

For more than a decade, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have worked to resolve the serious shortage of veterinarians in rural communities. With the passage of the National Veterinary Medical Service Act in December of 2003, a program was authorized to encourage large animal veterinarians to practice in communities that USDA designates as veterinary shortage areas. This is the VMLRP.

<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-medicine-loan-repayment-program>

### VSGP

While this assistance helps attract veterinarians to these communities, gaps remain in veterinarian recruitment, attracting and training technical support staff, and meeting the long-term costs of operating veterinary practices in these communities. VSGP addresses these needs and complements the loan repayment program by helping large animal veterinarians become established in these rural communities.

<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-services-grant-program>

Both of these programs were just reauthorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, and are designed to work together. VSGP complements the loan repayment program by helping large animal veterinarians become established in underserved rural communities.

# »» Preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

The PSLF program ensures that talented professionals are available to serve as healthcare providers, first responders, and public safety professionals in localities across our nation. For too many of our veterinary college graduates, student loan debt is a crippling barrier to pursuing careers in public service and academia.



- The PSLF was created in 2007 as part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. We are just starting to see the first group of borrowers who are eligible for forgiveness.
- Over 120 veterinary organizations have signed a letter supporting the continuation of this critical program.
- These roles include key positions at state departments of agriculture, fish and game departments, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) at USDA, and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), as well as faculty positions at our member universities.
- Our graduates are counting on Congress and the Administration to keep the promise created when the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) was created.
- The PSLF is an essential tool necessary to attract a trained workforce of veterinarians to advance animal and human health, and public food safety.
- We support programs that reduce the student debt burden and are willing to work with Congress on the best approaches for addressing this problem.



Association of American  
Veterinary Medical Colleges

202-371-9195

[www.aavmc.org](http://www.aavmc.org)

We urge you to keep the PSLF as an important part of the income-based repayment structure, and to vote against any version of Higher Education Act reauthorization that eliminates this critical program.