

# The BovLine<sup>®</sup>

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## Shortage??

You may or may not have noticed that there *really* is a shortage of food animal veterinarians. Here in Dalhart, we have more than the average number of veterinarians per capita. But when you begin to look at the species covered by each practice, you then notice some shortages.

We have observed this shortage as we've searched for additional veterinarians to add to our staff. While we are fortunate to have attracted some top applicants to fill our staffing needs, the number of applications is small. We believe that we are at an advantage being located in the middle of a developing dairy industry. There is an attraction to be part of something new where opportunities are abundant.

To assist in addressing the shortage, we are focusing in a couple of areas. First, we have been members of the Academy for Rural Veterinarians for the past two years. The mission of this organization is to be proactive and provide information to encourage interest in the rewards of veterinary practice in rural America.

Second, we have made a commitment to mentor students interested in pursuing a career in the dairy industry. We plan to host dairy science students as well as veterinary students that have a strong food animal interest and enthusiasm to learn. We have a screening process in place to ensure that we are investing time in the right students. We always ask permission from our clients to allow students to participate in our daily activities and you have all been very generous. We appreciate that and the students have made comments that our clients are very welcoming.

Along these lines, we are excited to announce that we will have a veterinary student intern this summer. Her name is Carissa Schloesser and she is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota. Her experience is in the swine area but one of her goals is to gain dairy experience. So please help us in making her summer a valuable learning experience.

Reference: Veterinary Economics August 2006

## Finding Food Animal Veterinarians



There have long been concerns about a food animal veterinary shortage. A recent study quantified the gap between producer needs and veterinary availability. This study entitled "Estimating Food Supply Veterinary Demand and Maintaining the Availability of Veterinarians for Careers in Food Supply Related Disciplines in the United States and Canada" was sponsored by the Food Supply Veterinary Medical Coalition and Bayer Animal Health. It projected that demand will increase 12-13 percent in the next 10 years, while there will be a 4-5 percent shortfall of veterinarians. Put another way, only 96 veterinarians will be available to fill 100 jobs.

The study surveyed students and veterinarians in schools, industry, government and practice. The number one factor attributed to the shortage was "less emphasis on food animal practice in veterinary colleges." This is especially true given that the majority of veterinary colleges now have predominantly female classes.

Students were concerned about poor income opportunities, jobs for spouses, lack of positive role models, limited lifestyle and career opportunities and a lack of cultural and recreational opportunities. See Table 1 (back page) for the top ten factors identified in the study. Not surprisingly, student's perceptions were not always reflective of actual conditions. Polled food animal veterinarians had a high degree of job satisfaction as compared to other segments of the veterinary profession.

The farm population segment is quickly shrinking. Therefore, there are more students entering veterinary schools with no farm background. So naturally there is a tendency for them to avoid food animal practice due to the lack of familiarity with this type of practice.

The generation of potential solutions is not an easy one. At this point, the federal government has become involved. In 2003 the federal government passed the National Veterinary Medical Service Act. While still unfunded, this act intended to repay student loans for graduates who work in underserved rural areas. Table 2 (back page) summarizes the top ten suggested solutions to the shortage.

# Meetings

To support our commitment of keeping our clients educated, informed and well-fed, we have a busy spring meeting schedule ahead. We hope that you will be able to join us!

- April
  - 20th Friday  
Dairy Quality Assurance Training @ 3 pm Circle H Animal Health RSVP \$15
  - 23rd Monday  
Putting Production Back Into Reproduction; Optimizing Immunity in the Neonatal Calf—Dr. Norm Stewart; Schering Plough Animal Health @ Bar H 7 pm RSVP
  - 27th Friday  
Dairy Quality Assurance Training in Spanish @ 3 pm Circle H Animal Health RSVP \$15
- May
  - 22 Tuesday  
Calf Scour Symposium by Novartis Animal Health location and time TBA
  - Date TBA  
The Value of Dairy Record Processing by AgSource location and time TBA

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<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Top 10 Factors Influencing the Shortage</b>
<b>According to 313 experts in schools, industry, government and practice...</b>	
1.	<b>High number of food supply veterinarians retiring</b>
2.	<b>Limited capacity of veterinary schools in North America</b>
3.	<b>Requirement for education beyond veterinary degree</b>
4.	<b>More women veterinarians entering the workforce</b>
5.	<b>Lack of cultural and recreational opportunities in rural areas</b>
6.	<b>Physical demands of large animal veterinary work</b>
7.	<b>Limited lifestyle and career opportunities in rural areas</b>
8.	<b>Federal and state budgetary constraints</b>
9.	<b>Perceived lack of demand</b>
10.	<b>High debt load</b>

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Top 10 Solutions to the Shortage</b>
<b>According to 313 experts in schools, industry, government and practice...</b>	
1.	<b>Student debt repayment and scholarship for service in areas of need</b>
2.	<b>Involve food supply veterinarians in training students</b>
3.	<b>Mentor students and new food animal veterinarians</b>
4.	<b>Appoint more food supply faculty</b>
5.	<b>Expand post graduate fellowships in food animal medicine</b>
6.	<b>Paid externship requirement in food animal practice in the summer</b>
7.	<b>Expand the concept of specialization among veterinary schools</b>
8.	<b>Marketing campaigns to increase awareness of career and lifestyle benefits of food animal work</b>
9.	<b>Expand paid work study programs during the final year of veterinary school</b>
10.	<b>Expand job placement services in areas of food animal practice</b>



## It's Fly Season

Here is a checklist to help you prepare for fly season:

- Eliminate breeding areas by...
  - Clean up old rotting hay or other forage piles
  - Repair water leaks to eliminate standing water
  - Maintain good drainage to remove excess water and waste
  - Haul manure to fields or compost
  - Keep vegetation mowed to reduce fly harborage
- Develop your control program
  - Identify the flies of concern (i.e. stable flies, house flies, horn flies, deer flies, etc.)
  - Develop a chemical control plan—Circle H has experience in this area and can provide assistance. Please note that the most effective chemicals require an applicator license for purchase
  - Start early before the fly population becomes established
  - Warm weather + frequent rain = rapidly increasing fly populations