



# NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

*"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **TAHC Accepting Nominations for Areas of Texas for the USDA Veterinary Loan Repayment Program**

**AUSTIN** - The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is accepting nominations until Friday, February 21 for areas of the state experiencing a specific need for veterinarians to work in the areas of food animal medicine, rural private practice, or public practice. The TAHC will forward nominations for selected areas to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for inclusion in the national Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) for the 2014 award cycle. The VMLRP will pay up to \$25,000 per year for three years towards qualified educational loans, for eligible veterinarians who agree to serve in a designated shortage area.

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture has specific criteria for nominated areas and the state will not be able to forward a nomination unless all of these criteria have been met. Individual nominations may also be edited or combined with others from nearby communities by the TAHC when appropriate. Including your current information will help the TAHC staff contact you if there are questions or if they need clarification on your nomination. Specific details on livestock populations, changing industry demographics, gaps in specific veterinary services currently available, community support, and future outlook for veterinary services (such as sole practitioners retiring or trying to sell a practice) are all valuable criteria in defining the need in a specific area.

The USDA program focuses on three types of veterinary practice and will accept nominations in each category

- Type I Shortage situations involve need for a veterinarian to spend at least 80 percent of time working on food animal species in a private practice setting.
- Type II Shortages involve need for a veterinarian to spend at least 30 percent of time working on food animal species, and providing veterinary services in a rural (remote or economically depressed) area in a private practice setting.
- Type III Shortage is defined as public practice, including work in public health, laboratory, local or state government veterinary work, meat inspection or epidemiology.

A map of the previously designated shortage areas from 2013 can be viewed on the USDA website at: [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in\\_focus/vmlrp\\_13/vmlrp\\_shortage\\_situation\\_texas.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/vmlrp_13/vmlrp_shortage_situation_texas.html). Any of the areas designated but not filled in 2013 (shown in black on the map) may be carried over to 2014. Areas highlighted in red may also be re-nominated, meaning a second veterinarian could receive an award to

practice in that area. TAHC will accept comments regarding the need to re-nominate previously designated areas, to the same email or fax listed below.

In 2013, one veterinarian accepted a loan repayment agreement with USDA to practice in Texas. The counties covered are Falls, Limestone and McLennan counties, in the northeastern part of Central Texas.

If you would like to nominate an area of Texas for the federal loan repayment program, go to this link <http://www.tahc.texas.gov/vets/VMLRP-2014.pdf> to complete the nomination form and forward to [comments@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:comments@tahc.texas.gov) or fax to 512-719-0719 attention Dr. Holly Hughes-Garza. Questions about the process, or comments regarding existing designated areas shown on the 2013 map, can be directed to Dr. Hughes-Garza at 512-719-0718 or [comments@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:comments@tahc.texas.gov).

Please do ***not*** send forms directly to the USDA as they will not be accepted unless approved by the State Veterinarian. **Deadline:** The TAHC will accept nominations until **5 p.m. on Friday, February 21, 2014.**

Late applications will not be accepted by the TAHC. For more information about the VMLRP and the process of shortage designation, visit: [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in\\_focus/an\\_health\\_if\\_vmlrp.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/an_health_if_vmlrp.html).

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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