



AGRICULTURE NEWS

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NATIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM AVAILABLE FOR VETERINARIANS IN HIGH-PRIORITY, UNDERSERVED AREAS ACROSS THE STATE

Program Reimburses Qualified Veterinarians for Education Costs in Underserved Areas, Cattaraugus, Otsego, Delaware and Sullivan Counties

Helps Bring Critical Veterinary Services to Communities to Protect Food Supply, Animal and Public Health

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball today reminded qualified veterinarians who are willing to provide veterinary services for livestock in the underserved areas of Delaware, Sullivan, Otsego and Cattaraugus counties that they can now apply for the 2019 Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP). The program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). It was created to incentivize veterinarians to fill the most serious veterinary shortage situations in the U.S. to protect the food supply and preserve animal and public health. Applications for the VMLRP must be submitted by **April 12, 2019**.

Commissioner Ball said, "This innovative program is a win-win for our veterinarians and for our communities. By providing education loan debt relief, the program encourages veterinarians to practice and gain valuable work experience in areas that face the most critical need. I encourage our veterinarians to consider this program and ensure that all areas across the state have access to high-level animal care."

The VMLRP will pay up to \$25,000 per year to offset educational loans of eligible veterinarians who agree to serve in a NIFA-designated veterinarian shortage area for three years. State Animal Health Officials (SAHOs) identify approximately 185 priority shortage situations across the U.S. each year. In New York State, Delaware, Sullivan, Otsego and Cattaraugus counties are considered high-priority shortage areas. A map of all NIFA-designated veterinary shortage situations and the nomination forms can be found [here](#).

Funding will be awarded nationwide to veterinarians serving in public, private or specialty practices in the areas of food animal medicine, public health, epidemiology, and food safety.

To be eligible to apply to the VMLRP, an applicant must:

- Have a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), or the equivalent, from an eligible college;
- Have a qualifying educational loan debt;
- Secure an offer of employment or establish and/or maintain a practice in a NIFA-designated veterinary shortage situation; and
- Provide certifications and verifications as defined in the Request for Applications.

Additional eligibility criteria can be found [here](#). Applications for the VMLRP must be submitted by **April 12, 2019**. More information about the program, instructions for applicants and the application documents are available [here](#).

About the Department

The Department, through its various divisions and programs, promotes New York agriculture and its high-quality and diverse products, fosters agricultural environmental stewardship, and safeguards the State's food supply, plant industry, land and livestock to ensure the viability and growth of New York's agriculture industries.

The Department operates the [Great New York State Fair](#), and administers the [Taste NY](#) initiative, the [FreshConnect](#) and [New York State Grown & Certified](#) programs. Follow the Department on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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