

USDA Signs Cooperative Agreement to Promote Veterinary Careers in Public Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) has signed a cooperative agreement with Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine to promote veterinary careers in public service. This program originally began in 2006 at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine's Center for Public and Corporate Practice and was moved to Mississippi State this year.

APHIS-VS recognizes that new and emerging disease pathogens—some of which might be zoonotic or exotic continue to threaten U.S. animal health. These pathogens could pose risks in the form of agroterrorism, bioterrorism and environmental safety and food safety problems that also can put the well-being of citizens in the United States and around the world at risk. As these threats grow and diversify, there is an increasing demand for veterinarians in the field of public practice and food supply veterinary medicine.

In response to these challenges, APHIS-VS has embarked on a partnership with Mississippi State University to provide experiential learning opportunities for students during summers, breaks and open rotations. Dr. Linda Detwiler, from the Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, Mississippi State University leads the program, coordinates the externship program for veterinary students, advertises internships and jobs, hosts a government career symposium at the Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) and develops outreach materials for the program.

As part of the program, Detwiler visits all 28 U.S. colleges of veterinary medicine, presenting information during lunch or evening seminars, as well as in some classes.

Public practice differs from private practice because it is not focused on individual animals. Instead, veterinary medicine is used to benefit the national or global flock or herd, and public health.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at aphis.usda.gov and click on the "Newsroom" button. More information about this program can be found at <http://www.cvm.msstate.edu/usdaextern/index.html>.

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