Statement of Support for the
Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to pass the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act, which will provide a federal income tax exemption for payments received under the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and similar state programs.

Since Congress passed the “National Veterinary Medical Services Act” (PL 108-161) on Dec. 6, 2003, it has appropriated $9.6 million for awards. About $3.75 million of this amount will be used by the Agriculture Secretary to pay taxes on the awards. Every dollar spent on taxes is one less available for loan repayment awards. If awards are made tax exempt, one additional veterinarian can be selected for every three awarded under current law.

The first 62 veterinarians were selected for VMLRP awards in September 2010. These veterinarians will practice food supply medicine and veterinary public health in federally designated shortage situations across the country. The selected group of veterinarians will receive up to $25,000 annually for three years to repay student loans. Each VMLRP award including taxes for three years costs approximately $104,250 per veterinarian ($75,000 for loan repayment and $29,250 for taxes).

Congress set a precedent for tax exemption. The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) loan repayment program (counterpart program for human medicine) was exempted by “The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004” (H.R. 4520, P.L. 108-357), enacted on Oct. 22, 2004. Prior to this legislative change, NHSC loan repayment awards were treated as taxable income.

Veterinarians selected for VMLRP provide a wide array of necessary veterinary services for farmers’ and ranchers’ livestock including beef and dairy cows, poultry, swine, goats, sheep, and farm horses. VMLRP veterinarians ensure animal health and welfare while protecting the nation’s food supply. They provide veterinarian-accredited medical procedures including routine services (vaccination, castration and dehorning) and emergency services (for acute illness, trauma, dystocia or obstetrical difficulties). Other services performed include those required for interstate movement of livestock, including commuter agreements and animal health testing requirements needed to ship livestock. VMLRP veterinarians perform tuberculosis checks and accredited blood sample services for Brucellosis, Bluetongue, and Bovine Viral Diarrhea. Additionally, they may provide reproduction management consultation services and consultation in health care programs and nutrition, disease surveillance and diagnostics for state and federal disease programs and foreign animal diseases. They may also play a role in a state’s veterinary emergency response team and take part in disease control and eradication programs.

Exempting veterinary medicine loan repayment and forgiveness program awards from federal income taxation will lead to more communities having needed veterinary services sooner than they may otherwise. We strongly support Congress’ efforts to ensure that our nation’s livestock are healthy, that our food supply is safe and secure, and our public health is protected.

Sincerely,
American Veterinary Medical Association
Academy of Rural Veterinarians
Alabama Veterinary Medical Association
Alaska Veterinary Medical Association
American Animal Hospital Association
American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition
American Association for Laboratory Animal Science
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Corporate and Public Practice Veterinarians
American Association of Equine Practitioners
American Association of Feline Practitioners
American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians
American Association of Public Health Veterinarians
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Clinicians
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Association of Zoo Veterinarians
American Board of Veterinary Practitioners
American Board of Veterinary Toxicology
American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine
American College of Poultry Veterinarians
American College of Theriogenologists
American College of Veterinary Dermatology
American College of Veterinary Pathologists
American College of Veterinary Radiology
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation®
American Feed Industry Association
American Horse Council
American Meat Institute
American Rabbit Breeders Association, Inc.
American Sheep Industry Association
American Society of Animal Science
American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners
American Veal Association
American Veterinary Medical Foundation
Animal Agriculture Alliance's
Animal Health Institute
Animal Welfare Institute
Arizona Veterinary Medical Association
Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association
Association for Women Veterinarians Foundation
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Avian Veterinarians
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies
Association of Zoos & Aquariums
Bayer Animal Health
Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.
California Veterinary Medical Association
Center for Rural Affairs
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Elanco Animal Health (A Division of Eli Lilly & Company)
Federation for Animal Science Societies
Florida Veterinary Medical Association
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association
Idaho Veterinary Medical Association
Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association
Indiana Veterinary Medical Association
International Lama Registry
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
Kansas Bioscience Authority
Kansas City Animal Health Corridor
Supporters of VMLRP tax exemption

Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
Livestock Marketing Association
Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Maine Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
Montana Veterinary Medical Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
National Chicken Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Dairy Herd Information Association
National Farmers Union
National Institute for Animal Agriculture
National Livestock Producers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Renderers Association
National Turkey Federation
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association
Nevada Veterinary Medical Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
New York State Veterinary Medical Society
North American Deer Farmers Association
North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Northeast States Association for Agriculture Stewardship
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Pet Food Institute
Pfizer Animal Health
Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association (Colegio de Medicos Veterinarios de Puerto Rico)
Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association
Poultry Science Association
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Silliker, Inc.
Society for Theriogenology
South Carolina Association of Veterinarians
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association
South Dakota Farmers Union
South Dakota Pork Producers Council
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
South Dakota Farm Bureau
State Agriculture and Rural Leaders
Student American Veterinary Medical Association
Synbiotics Corporation
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association
Texas Veterinary Medical Association
Utah Veterinary Medical Association
United Egg Producers
United States Animal Health Association
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington State Veterinary Medical Association
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association