

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1367

AN ACT

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a loan repayment program regarding the provision of veterinary services in shortage situations, and for other purposes.

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AN ACT

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a loan repayment program regarding the provision of veterinary services in shortage situations, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION. 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “National Veterinary
3 Medical Service Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**
5 **REGARDING VETERINARY MEDICINE.**

6 The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and
7 Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) is
8 amended by inserting after section 1415 the following new
9 section:

10 **“SEC. 1415A. VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT.**

11 “(a) PROGRAM.—

12 “(1) SERVICE IN SHORTAGE SITUATIONS.—The
13 Secretary shall carry out a program of entering into
14 agreements with veterinarians under which the vet-
15 erinarians agree to provide, for a period of time as
16 determined by the Secretary and specified in the
17 agreement, veterinary services in veterinarian short-
18 age situations. For each year of such service under
19 an agreement under this paragraph, the Secretary
20 shall pay an amount, as determined by the Secretary
21 and specified in the agreement, of the principal and
22 interest of qualifying educational loans of the veteri-
23 narians.

24 “(2) SERVICE TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN
25 EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
2 enter into agreements of one year duration with
3 veterinarians who have agreements pursuant to
4 paragraph (1) for such veterinarians to provide
5 services to the Federal Government in emer-
6 gency situations, as determined by the Sec-
7 retary, under terms and conditions specified in
8 the agreement. Pursuant to an agreement
9 under this paragraph, the Secretary shall pay
10 an amount, in addition to the amount paid pur-
11 suant to the agreement in paragraph (1), as de-
12 termined by the Secretary and specified in the
13 agreement, of the principal and interest of
14 qualifying educational loans of the veterinar-
15 ians.

16 “(B) REQUIREMENTS.—Agreements en-
17 tered into under this paragraph shall include
18 the following:

19 “(i) A veterinarian shall not be re-
20 quired to serve more than 60 working days
21 per year of the agreement.

22 “(ii) A veterinarian who provides serv-
23 ice pursuant to the agreement shall receive
24 a salary commensurate with the duties and
25 shall be reimbursed for travel and per diem

1 expenses as appropriate for the duration of
2 the service.

3 “(b) DETERMINATION OF VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE
4 SITUATIONS.—In determining ‘veterinarian shortage situ-
5 ations’ the Secretary may consider the following:

6 “(1) Urban or rural areas that the Secretary
7 determines have a shortage of veterinarians.

8 “(2) Areas of veterinary practice that the Sec-
9 retary determines have a shortage of veterinarians,
10 such as public health, epidemiology, and food safety.

11 “(3) Areas of veterinary need in the Federal
12 Government.

13 “(4) Other factors that the Secretary considers
14 to be relevant.

15 “(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

16 “(1) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may carry
17 out this program directly or enter into agreements
18 with another Federal agency or other service pro-
19 vider to assist in the administration of this program.

20 “(2) BREACH REMEDIES.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Agreements with pro-
22 gram participants shall provide remedies for
23 any breach of an agreement by a participant,
24 including repayment or partial repayment of fi-
25 nancial assistance received, with interest.

1 “(B) AMOUNTS RECOVERED.—Funds re-
2 covered under this subsection shall be credited
3 to the account available to carry out this sec-
4 tion and shall remain available until expended.

5 “(3) WAIVER.—The Secretary may grant a
6 waiver of the repayment obligation for breach of
7 contract in the event of extreme hardship or extreme
8 need, as determined by the Secretary.

9 “(4) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall develop
10 regulations to determine the amount of loan repay-
11 ment for a year of service by a veterinarian. In mak-
12 ing the determination, the Secretary shall consider
13 the extent to which such determination—

14 “(A) affects the ability of the Secretary to
15 maximize the number of agreements that can
16 be provided under the Veterinary Medicine
17 Loan Repayment Program from the amounts
18 appropriated for such agreements; and

19 “(B) provides an incentive to serve in vet-
20 erinary service shortage areas with the greatest
21 need.

22 “(5) QUALIFYING EDUCATIONAL LOANS.—Loan
23 repayments provided under this section may consist
24 of payments on behalf of participating individuals of
25 the principal and interest on government and com-

1 mercial loans received by the individual for attend-
2 ance of the individual at an accredited college of vet-
3 erinary medicine resulting in a degree of Doctor of
4 Veterinary Medicine or the equivalent, which loans
5 were made for—

6 “(A) tuition expenses;

7 “(B) all other reasonable educational ex-
8 penses, including fees, books, and laboratory ex-
9 penses, incurred by the individual; or

10 “(C) reasonable living expenses as deter-
11 mined by the Secretary.

12 “(6) REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—The Secretary
13 may enter into an agreement with the holder of any
14 loan for which payments are made under this section
15 to establish a schedule for the making of such pay-
16 ments.

17 “(7) TAX LIABILITY.—In addition to edu-
18 cational loan repayments, the Secretary shall make
19 such additional payments to participants as the Sec-
20 retary determines to be appropriate for the purpose
21 of providing reimbursements to participants for indi-
22 vidual tax liability resulting from participation in
23 this program.

24 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
25 are authorized to be appropriated for carrying out this sec-

1 tion such sums as may be necessary and such sums shall
2 remain available to the Secretary for the purposes of this
3 section until expended.”.

Passed the House of Representatives November 17,
2003.

Attest:

Clerk.