

use the designated veterinarian shortage situations to solicit VMLRP loan repayment applications from individual veterinarians in accordance with subpart B of this part.

Subpart B—Administration of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

§ 3431.8 Purpose and scope.

(a) *Purpose.* The regulations of this subpart apply to the award of veterinary medicine loan repayments under the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) authorized by the National Veterinary Medicine Service Act, 7 U.S.C. 3151a.

(b) *Scope.* Under the VMLRP, the Secretary enters into service agreements with veterinarians to pay principal and interest on education loans of veterinarians who agree to work in veterinary shortage situations for a prescribed period of time. In addition, program participants may enter into an agreement to provide services to the Federal government in emergency situations in exchange for salary, travel, per diem expenses, and additional amounts of loan repayment assistance. The purpose of the program is to assure an adequate supply of trained food animal veterinarians in shortage situations and provide USDA with a pool of veterinary specialists to assist in the control and eradication of animal disease outbreaks.

§ 3431.9 Eligibility to apply.

(a) *General.* To be eligible to apply to the VMLRP an applicant must:

(1) Have a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), or the equivalent, from a college of veterinary medicine accredited by the AVMA Council on Education;

(2) Have qualifying educational loan debt as defined in § 3431.3;

(3) Secure an offer of employment or establish and/or maintain a practice in a veterinary shortage situation, as determined by the Secretary in accordance with the procedures in subpart A of this part, within the time period specified in the VMLRP service agreement offer; and

(4) Provide certifications and verifications in accordance with § 3431.16.

(b) *Non-eligibility.* The following individuals are ineligible to apply to the VMLRP:

(1) An individual who owes an obligation for veterinary service to the Federal government, a State, or other entity under an agreement with such Federal, State, or other entity are ineligible for the VMLRP unless such obligation will be completely satisfied prior to the beginning of service under the VMLRP;

(2) An individual who has a Federal judgment lien against his/her property arising from Federal debt; and

(3) An individual who has total qualified debt that does not meet the debt threshold.

§ 3431.10 Eligibility to participate.

To be eligible to participate in the VMLRP, a participant must meet the following criteria:

(a) Meet the eligibility criteria of § 3431.9 for applying to the VMLRP;

(b) Be selected for participation by the Secretary pursuant to § 3431.12.

(c) Comply with all State and local regulations (including appropriate licensure where required) in the jurisdiction in which he or she proposes to practice;

(d) Be a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States;

(e) Sign a service agreement to provide veterinary services in one of the veterinarian shortage situations; and

(f) Comply with the terms and conditions of the Service Agreement.

§ 3431.11 Application.

Individuals who meet the eligibility criteria of § 3431.9 may submit an online program application or any other application process provided by the Secretary.

§ 3431.12 Selection of applicants.

(a) *Review of applications.* Upon receipt, applications for the VMLRP will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness by the appropriate staff as determined by the Secretary. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be processed or reviewed.