

Meeting the Critical Need

- › Nationally, there is a decline in beef production. In West Virginia, the numbers have increased by more than 5,000 head of cattle. We need veterinary technologists to help support continued agricultural growth.
- › Commercial red meat production during November 2023 totalled 1.2 million pounds, this was up 9 percent from November 2022.
- › In West Virginia, our apiaries have shown significant growth for the past five years. In 2019, we had 714 apiaries and 8,996 colonies. In 2024, the number increased to 1,945 apiaries and 15,746 colonies. West Virginia registered beekeepers increased from 406 to 1,152 in the same time frame.
- › Pet ownership in the U.S. has jumped significantly over the past three decades. As of 2023, 66% of U.S. households (86.9 million homes) own a pet. That's up from 56% in 1988, pet ownership statistics show. – *www.Forbes.com*



In West Virginia, there are 670 licensed veterinarians, but only 269 registered veterinary technicians in all practices. This means there is only one registered technician for every three veterinarians.

One Health

The health of animals, people and the environment are interconnected. The “One Health” approach is the collaborative effort of professionals in animals, people and environmental fields to address local to global health issues including animal and food production. More than 50% of all human infections are zoonotic diseases (those that spread between animals and people).

Our partnership will integrate veterinary technology students with students from other health-related fields in One Health perspective courses.

For more information visit:
<https://www.usda.gov/topics/animals/one-health>

VETERINARY TECHNOLOGISTS AMPLIFY THE CAPACITY OF VETERINARIANS.



For more information:

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A collaboration between West Virginia University, West Virginia State University and The West Virginia Department of Agriculture



Projected 16% growth rate in vet tech jobs over the next 10 years.

Providing Veterinary Medicine Opportunities in West Virginia



- There are no Bachelor-level Vet Tech programs in West Virginia. Vet Tech Bachelor-level programs are a cost-effective way to prepare students for an open job market and fill a much-needed gap in veterinary care in West Virginia.
- West Virginia land grant universities - West Virginia State University (WVSU) and West Virginia University (WVU) have more than 90% of the required curriculum in place and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) offers exposure to public animal health and state laboratory environments.
- The WVDA Regulatory Division offers exposure to state laboratories focused on human and animal food, animal diagnostics, environmental and plant health, entomology, parasitology, microbiology and chemistry.
- The WVDA Animal Health Division offers students exposure to animal disease surveillance and regulatory animal medicine.
- In West Virginia, less than 20% of students entering college hoping to go to a college of veterinary medicine are successful.
- A veterinary technology program has the potential to keep the remaining 80% of these students engaged to help fill positions in clinical and laboratory medicine, public animal health, animal production, pharmaceuticals and other agricultural related fields.
- Veterinary Technologists, as an extension of the veterinarian can fill an essential need in animal medicine. West Virginia is a leader with the collaborative approach we are pursuing and leading the way nationally for a new standard in animal care.

What is a Registered Veterinary Tech?

Veterinary Technicians/Technologists are:

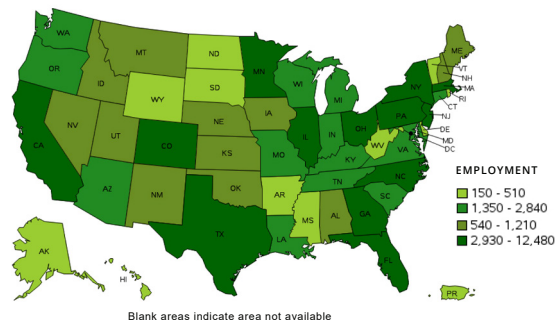
- ✓ animal nurses
- ✓ patient advocates
- ✓ phlebotomists
- ✓ surgery technicians
- ✓ laboratory technicians
- ✓ anaesthesia technicians
- ✓ radiology technicians

Could you imagine a human hospital functioning with only 1 nurse for every 3 doctors?

The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends 4 techs per veterinarian for maximum efficiency.

In West Virginia large animal practices, the ratio is 1 technician for every 9 veterinarians. Below shows a diagram of veterinary technologists and technicians by state in May of 2020.

Employment of veterinary technologists and technicians, by state, May 2020



- With the implementation of the FDA Veterinary Feed Directive, elimination of over-the-counter sales of antibiotics and likely changes to telemedicine, the need for more vet techs is growing exponentially.
- In West Virginia, we will have Veterinary Technology Programs that train students at the Career Technical Colleges as Veterinary Technicians and soon at our two land grant institutions as Veterinary Technologists. It is our desire to enhance the opportunities for the Career and Technical College Associates Degree student via experiential learning and articulate those students to a bachelor of sciences degree as desired.

I find it exciting that the team that has come together to establish VetStart WV is leveraging existing resources at both of West Virginia's Land Grant Universities and the state Department of Agriculture to deliver a holistic, One-Health focused program to add value to the 4-year degrees already offered at the two institutions. This type of partnership between academic institutions and states is unprecedented and serves as a model for others. – *Rustin M. Moore, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVS Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine Ruth Stanton Chair in Veterinary Medicine The Ohio State University*

