



Telephone: 530-752-4739
Fax: 530-752-5680
Email: shietala@cahfs.ucdavis.edu

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, Inc.
PO Box 1770
Davis, CA 95617-1770

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September 25, 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) represents over 1500 members, most working within over 43 AAVLD accredited laboratories. Daily, these laboratories provide diagnostic services for veterinarians, animal producers, animal owners, wildlife and public health agencies. AAVLD laboratories work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in surveillance for, response to and recovery from foreign animal diseases, and recognition of emerging diseases, primarily through the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). Many AAVLD laboratories also work closely with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the Laboratory Response Network (LRN), or with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN). Working within these networks, as well as in daily work, AAVLD laboratories provide diagnostics for the agriculture industries and food animal veterinarians, for public health officials, and for protection of our nation's food supply.

The AAVLD has recognized for a number of years a severe shortage of veterinarians to staff its laboratories. This is stated in AAVLD's strategic plan: "Implement programs to increase the pool of individuals in pursuing careers in veterinary diagnostic laboratories. Most laboratories are struggling with staff and faculty recruitment due to few trainees". As a recognition of this shortage, the AAVLD recently completed a survey of its member laboratories to document this shortage. The results are being analyzed and will be available in mid-October. This shortage includes veterinarians in multiple laboratory disciplines, including pathology, bacteriology, virology, toxicology and parasitology. These veterinarians not only staff AAVLD laboratories, but they also educate our next generation of veterinarians.

We request that USDA CSREES recognize this shortage of veterinarians in AAVLD laboratories and that the debt relief be made available for veterinarians willing to pursue residencies and/or advanced degrees in the above-named disciplines. Most residency positions are a three-year obligation, but current salaries are insufficient for many recent graduate

September 18, 2008

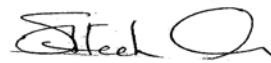
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veterinarians who have acquired a large debt completing their four-year professional education. Therefore, many recent graduate veterinarians who may wish to pursue further education in AAVLD laboratories cannot afford to do so. The AAVLD feels that debt-forgiveness for these interested graduate veterinarians would greatly increase the workforce of laboratory diagnosticians. We also suggest that debt relief be made available to recently graduated veterinary diagnosticians who work in food animal veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

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Dr. Grant Maxie, President



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Dr. Gary Anderson, Vice President



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