

# Why Utah Needs More Veterinarians

Animal agriculture in Utah is valued at more than **\$1 billion** annually, with 25 of the state's 29 counties reporting livestock as the dominant facet of their agricultural economy.

Utah currently has **15% fewer veterinarians** than the national average to support its rapidly growing population. Utah ranks **42nd in the nation** in this category. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The National Institutes of Health reports that **among human pathogens, 61% originate in animals**. This is true of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that caused the COVID-19 pandemic, brucellosis, Lyme disease, and rabies.

As Utah residents and visitors increasingly move into what has been wildlife habitat—both to live and for recreation—more encounters with wildlife and the pathogens they can spread will increase.



## Proposal for a College of Veterinary Medicine for the State of Utah

We propose transforming the current model of veterinary medical education in Utah to include an accredited college of veterinary medicine at Utah State University that will better serve people, animals, and support public health in communities throughout the state.

### 2 USU+2 WSU=DVM

Since 2012, Utah State University has been part of the Washington-Idaho-Montana-Utah (WIMU) Regional Program in Veterinary Medicine. Each fall semester 30 students—20 of whom must be Utah residents—begin their formal veterinary medical education on USU's Logan campus. Students complete two years of intensive, foundational study at USU and gain hands-on

experience with animals at the university's Animal Science Research Farm and are offered research opportunities. Students then move on to Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine where they join cohorts from other WIMU schools and complete the final two years of the DVM degree program.

Students who are Utah residents continue to pay in-state tuition after they move to WSU, subsidized by funding from the state that covers the difference between resident and non-resident tuition.



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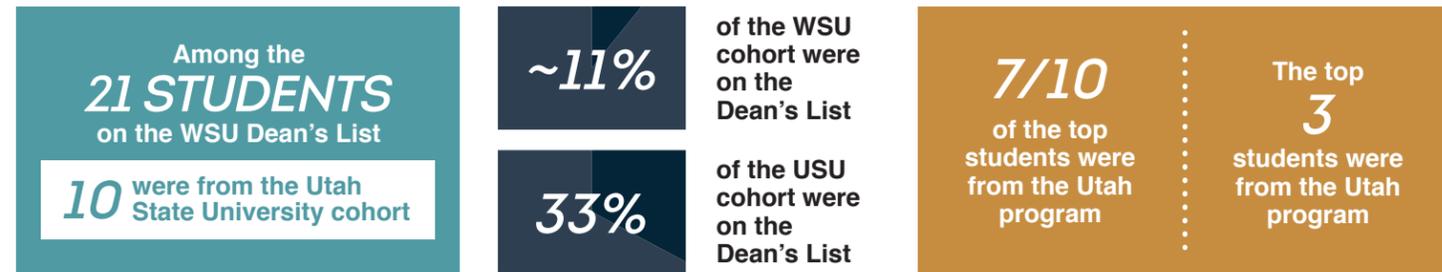
## A Record of Student Success

Since its beginning, 272 students have been admitted to USU's veterinary medicine program. Just five students chose to leave or were not allowed to complete the program.

All graduates of our program have passed the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination and are employed in the veterinary profession.



## A Snapshot of 3rd-Year Student Achievements: Class of 2022



## A Distributed Model of Vet Med Education



USU's proposed plan does not depend upon, or even include, the capital expenses of building, staffing and ongoing operating costs of a veterinary hospital.

The distributed model proposed by USU has been piloted and proven by several vet schools in the U.S. and Canada and is increasingly being adopted by existing vet schools. In this program students' clinical training will be supervised by veterinary medical professionals/preceptors who will be placed with students in existing medical practices and animal facilities in Utah. These professionals will be considered USU faculty.

### Benefits of this model include:

- No state investment in a veterinary hospital facility, its staffing, or ongoing costs.
- The College of Veterinary Medicine would collaborate with, not compete with, veterinarians in Utah.
- The college's proposed distributed model will place skilled veterinary medical preceptors at clinics in Utah communities.
- Admission will remain competitive, but more Utah residents will have opportunities to pursue veterinary medicine as the size of incoming classes grows.
- A college of veterinary medicine in the state will enhance Utah scientists' ability to compete for federal biomedical research funding.
- Veterinarians and facilities providing clinical training sites will be compensated for their work with students.
- Graduates of the program will be workforce-ready on Day 1 because of extensive and diverse clinical experiences in industry and with private practitioners as opposed to spending most of their final year in a university teaching hospital.
- Because Utah State University is true to its land-grant mission founded in agricultural sciences, the school's Animal Science Research Farm gives veterinary medical students experience with horses, dairy and beef cattle, small ruminants, and other animals under faculty supervision even during the two pre-clinical years of their degree program.

## Potential Benefits and Economic Impacts of a Utah Vet School

In the current model, **\$1.7 million** of state funding goes to Washington State University annually to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition for the 20 students who are Utah residents. An estimated additional **\$340,000** of other funds go to WSU each year as our students move through the WIMU program. A DVM-granting school at USU would retain that funding and bring an estimated **\$14.6 million** to our state and local economies.

The proposed expansion will admit **80 students annually**—half of whom will be Utah residents—who will pay tuition at USU and live in Utah communities during their 4-year DVM program.

Veterinary medicine in Utah employs **over 2,500 people** with employee compensation of **over \$94 million**. It also accounts for **\$1.7 million in tax** on production and imports. The total effect is over 3,200 jobs, and **\$367 million** in output with state and local taxes on production and imports of **\$6.7 million** (mainly in property and sales taxes). Related households and corporations also account for an additional almost **\$5 million**. (Based on the Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN) model and its 2019 database for Utah)

