
Hon. Jon Reyes
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
Room 156 Legislative Building - 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

RE: Shortage of Veterinarians in Manitoba

Dear Minister Reyes,

Manitoba is currently facing a vast shortfall of veterinarians in the province. According to a Spring 2022 sector scan conducted by the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA), there are 425 veterinarians currently practicing in Manitoba. Based on a recent workforce survey, there are at least 68 full time equivalent veterinarian positions that remain unfilled and are needed to meet current demand in the private clinical practice sector alone.

The MVMA asserts that the shortage of veterinarians is at crisis levels and that immediate action is required to ensure that Manitobans and their animals have reasonable access to veterinary care.

Manitoba Egg Farmers concurs with the analysis and sentiments expressed by the MVMA. Manitoba Egg Farmers (MEF) represents 170 regulated egg and pullet farmers in Manitoba. MEF is an independent organization, funded entirely by egg and pullet farmers.

Egg farmers are the primary caregivers of their hens that produce about 76 million dozen eggs in Manitoba each year. On average, each egg farm has about 15,000 laying hens which lay approximately 380,000 dozen eggs each year. There are approximately 2.6 million layers and 2.6 million pullets in the province of Manitoba, with layers representing almost 10% of the market share in Canada.

The commercial egg and pullet industry is currently serviced by one well-experienced veterinarian who also works with stakeholders in the broiler and turkey sector. The poultry sector is currently dealing with the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) which has stretched professional veterinarian resources even further. Should the latest strain of HPAI re-surface in the Fall and/or become endemic, the shortage of qualified vets will become even more acute.

MEF requests that the Government of Manitoba increase the number of subsidized Manitoba seats at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine on an ongoing basis from 15 seats to 25 seats starting for the 2023/2024 academic year. Manitoba must drastically increase the number of veterinarians in the province to meet the current demand for veterinary services and ensure that livestock producers and their animals have timely access to veterinary care.

Manitoba Egg Farmers is willing to collaborate with the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association, the Government of Manitoba, and industry stakeholders to address this shortage of qualified personnel. MEF requests that the Government of Manitoba work with the MVMA and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine to explore and implement approaches that will encourage more current and future Manitoba veterinary graduates to apply their skills in Manitoba.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Rybuck".

Cory Rybuck
General Manager, Manitoba Egg Farmers