

Veterinary Medicine: Economic Impact in Ohio 2011



Produced by The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, along with the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association

vet.osu.edu

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE



Nearly eight million people in Ohio start their day by interacting with animals. We share our homes with 3.6 million cats, 3.2 million dogs, and nearly a half-million birds. Beyond those walls live 2.6 million “food animals,” primarily cattle and hogs residing on 45,000 Ohio farms, along with more than 30 million chickens and turkeys. Add to those, more than 320,000 horses and thousands of goats, sheep, llamas, alpacas, and other, more exotic, creatures that dwell among us.

Animals enrich our lives and improve our health. We depend on canines for companionship, as well as service in the form of police protection, visual assistance, and numerous other venues. The close relationships between pets and their owners are being studied. Pet ownership provides mental and physical health benefits. Animal owners expect the same sophisticated medical care for their pets that they receive for other members of their family. The responsibility for the health and safety of all these animals rests with Ohio’s veterinarians. Nearly 3,500 veterinarians work in the state and 85 percent of these doctors graduated from The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Beyond caring for the companion animals in our homes, Ohio’s veterinarians also are responsible for assuring all residents a safe, viable, nutritious, and sustainable food supply and providing support to the \$107 billion agricultural industry in the state. Most veterinarians work in private practice caring for the animals that reside in our homes and on our farms. Nearly 800 Ohio veterinarians serve other vital roles: Improving public health and conducting biomedical research; preventing the spread of disease; serving zoos and government agencies including the military; and delivering clinical, research, teaching, and outreach services for universities.

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine serves the state in all these areas—training the next generation of veterinary scientists and clinicians, including the specialists who care for sick and injured animals, as well as providing the researchers who may cure cancer, track down an outbreak of E. coli, and prevent the next pandemic.

We understand the important roles that veterinarians play in the state of Ohio, and we also wonder: What is the economic impact of this important work? The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, along with the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, undertook the state’s first-ever study of the economic impact of the veterinary profession in the state of Ohio in 2010. The findings are summarized in this brochure.



Nearly 3,500 veterinarians work in the state and 85 percent of these doctors graduated from The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.



Ohio's Veterinary Medicine Workforce

When most people hear the word “veterinarian,” they think of the kind and caring professional who looks after household pets. In Ohio, they are half right. In fact, well over half of Ohio’s 3,500 veterinarians — about 1,800*—specialize in companion animal care. Nearly 200 veterinarians specialize in food animal care, more than 160 care for both types of animals, and another 140 focus solely on caring for horses.

In all, at least 65 percent** of Ohio veterinarians are engaged in private practice, looking after the health and well-being of companion animals, food animals, horses, exotics, and wildlife. Where do the rest work? The largest number of them—nearly 250—work at Ohio’s colleges and universities in the classroom, as researchers, or caring for animals. Another 100 work for companies in the private sector, with 100 more employed in government, many of whom are focused on food safety and the control of both animal and human diseases.

Ohio’s veterinarians are not the only professionals engaged in the veterinary medical workforce statewide. They are joined by veterinary technicians who work under veterinary supervision performing medical tests, assisting with animal care, performing blood and tissue sampling and testing, and cleaning and sterilizing instruments, materials, and equipment. Meanwhile, veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers feed, water, and otherwise perform routine care of pets and other non-farm animals. They work in laboratories, animal hospitals, and clinics. Ohio has approximately 1,100 private practices and clinics. These also represent key businesses for Ohio. They employ more than 12,000 personnel and serve communities across the state.

Total Veterinary “Jobs” Impact in Ohio

The “jobs” impact of the veterinary profession in Ohio extends far beyond the number of people employed as actual veterinarians. More than 59,000 Ohioans work in 14 separate economic sectors related to the profession. These sectors include everything from animal food manufacturing to zoos and racetracks; from pet and pet supply stores to

veterinarians’ offices; from medical equipment and supply manufacturers and wholesalers to biotechnical research and development laboratories. In all, Ohio is home to 3,627 establishments that are devoted to one of those activities, and closely associated with both public and private practices and businesses. These businesses, which add another \$3 billion to the Ohio economy, benefit from having the country’s largest veterinary college at The Ohio State University, which provides strategic partnerships and a highly qualified workforce to fill jobs and services.

Interestingly, the largest number of people working in a veterinary-related field is the 17,182 employed in the biotechnology research and development area. They are followed in number by the 11,780 who work in veterinary practices and testing services. The smallest numbers are employed at Ohio racetracks (1,003) and equine boarding facilities (389).

Dollars and Cents

Veterinary medicine is a vital component of the state’s economic engine. The practice of veterinary medicine adds to the economy of the communities it serves. There is also the direct role that veterinary medicine plays in maintaining the health of food animals and assuring a safe food supply. Veterinarians improve public health through reduction of zoonotic diseases, which are diseases transmitted from animals to people. The state economy also benefits through an additional economic impact provided by the various veterinary-related fields.

*All statistics used in this brochure are for the year 2008.

**About 18 percent of veterinarians in Ohio declined to specify the type of work in which they are currently engaged.

Veterinary practitioners, as small business owners, contributed \$1.1 billion to Ohio's economy in 2008. When you include other related segments within Ohio's economy, veterinary medicine provided \$1.96 billion.

When viewed within its role in the larger agri-food sector of our state's economy, the vital role of veterinary medicine cannot be underestimated. Comprising farming, agricultural production, food manufacturing, food wholesaling and retailing, and food service, the agri-food sector of Ohio's

economy represents 11 percent of all economic output to the state, and accounts for 13.5 percent of total employment.

Approximately 40 percent of Ohio grain crops are produced to feed livestock and

poultry. Thus, a strong and healthy livestock and poultry population ensures the market for these Ohio products. A strong veterinary infrastructure is essential to protecting this substantial economic asset for Ohio. Ohio has state and federal veterinary officials who serve the important function of rapid detection and response to animal diseases, many of which represent threats to human health.

Ohio's Food Animals: Are They at Risk?

There is no question that Ohio farm animals and poultry are significant assets to the state economy. Yet, these animals are extremely vulnerable to devastating diseases such as foot-and-mouth and influenza. Veterinary practitioners, along with university, state, and federal veterinarians, are critical in monitoring these animals, conducting lab tests, and are prepared to rapidly respond to diseases that could devastate an animal population.

How Ohio ranks nationally

1st	Swiss cheese production
2nd	Egg production
5th	Dairy manufacturing plants
7th	Number of chickens sold
9th	Hog/pig production
9th	Cheese production
11th	Milk production



Ohio has nearly 200 food animal veterinarians dedicated to Ohio's herds and flocks. There are also more than 160 veterinarians who are considered mixed animal practitioners and serve the livestock and farm animal populations as well.

Numbers such as these could suggest that the safety of food animals, and by extension our food supply, may be at risk. Indeed, these numbers highlight that the most critical shortages of veterinarians nationwide include those who care for food animals or serve in rural communities. However, it is also important to understand the nature of veterinary work in counties with large food animal populations.

Data demonstrate that Ohio farmers, like much of the nation, are using fewer staff to raise more food animals. Veterinarians therefore function more as scientific or professional advisors, monitoring general herd health, examining monthly outputs and production, and conducting feed analyses, as well as looking for adverse trends that could spell trouble for Ohio's food animals.

Summary

The College of Veterinary Medicine at The Ohio State University was founded in 1885. More veterinarians have graduated from Ohio State than any college in the United States. The majority of graduates remain in Ohio, caring for the growing population of companion animals, protecting the health and well-being of farm animals that help make Ohio one of this country's premiere agricultural and food states, and providing an expanding scope of services in research, public health, global food systems, and animal welfare. Collectively, Ohio veterinarians directly contribute nearly \$2 billion to the state economy, add \$3 billion in associated businesses, and protect the \$107 billion agricultural industry. Whether working with individual animals or large herds and flocks, veterinarians improve health, add to the economy, and protect key assets.

View the full report: vet.osu.edu/cvm/history

Thanks to the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association for support of this project.

Lonnie King, dean and Ruth Stanton
Chair in Veterinary Medicine

College of Veterinary Medicine
1900 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 292-1171
vet.osu.edu



COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE

...Ohio veterinarians directly contribute nearly \$2 billion to the state economy, add \$3 billion in associated businesses, and protect the \$107 billion agricultural industry.