

Protect OHIO: One Year of Impact

In its first year, Protect One Health in Ohio (Protect OHIO) engaged students, supported the next generation of rural veterinarians and fostered partnerships that address Ohio's large animal veterinary shortage. The initiative will continue to strengthen the future of rural veterinary medicine through statewide outreach, education and collaboration.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LARGE ANIMAL VETERINARIANS

Protect OHIO engaged thousands of students across the state, helping strengthen the pipeline of future large animal veterinarians. The examples below highlight just a few of the camps, conferences, partnerships and outreach programs that are inspiring the next generation of veterinary professionals.

- **CAREER EXPLORATION PARTNERSHIPS** Protect OHIO partnered with Ohio Farm Bureau to help plan and deliver two ExploreAg camps and with Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences to provide experiences with 4-H SPARK Expo. Both programs provided hands-on career exploration that introduced students to opportunities in large animal veterinary medicine.
- **OHIO FFA CONVENTION** Outreach at the Ohio FFA Convention engaged students already involved in agriculture and animal sciences, helping strengthen the pipeline of future large animal veterinarians.
- **BUCKEYE VET CAMP** Protect OHIO sponsored 15 students from rural Ohio to attend this highly competitive program designed to introduce young people to veterinary careers.



EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OHIO STUDENTS

Increased enrollment to meet Ohio's rural veterinary workforce needs

The Class of 2030 is expected to include 177 students, an increase from the previous class size of 165, with approximately 39 students from rural or semi-rural counties.

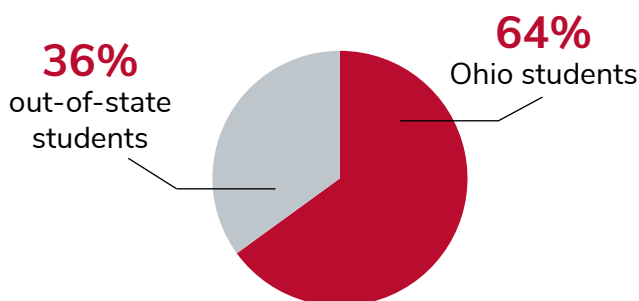
Through philanthropy, university resources and state support, significant progress has been made towards the facility renovations and planning, and the staff and faculty hiring required to accommodate a growing class size.

SUPPORTING STUDENT FINANCIAL SUCCESS

In Fall 2025, the college awarded \$900,000 in Protect OHIO scholarships to 42 rural Ohio students interested in large animal medicine, **with plans to award \$1M in 2026-27 to rural Ohio students across all four years of study.** The college prioritizes scholarships to address affordability and accessibility, **awarding more than \$8.1 million in philanthropic scholarships over the past two years.**

Students also gained valuable information about loan repayment programs through a session with representatives from the USDA and Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board, helping them explore financial pathways to practice in Ohio's large animal veterinary shortage areas.

CLASS OF 2030 MAKEUP





PREPARING FUTURE RURAL VETERINARIANS WITH HANDS-ON LEARNING

Strengthening Ohio's veterinary workforce through experiential learning and mentorship

Programs such as Large Animal Spectrum of Care Externships and the Large Animal Rural Veterinary Mentoring Program provide veterinary students with **hands-on clinical experiences, mentorship and meaningful exposure to real-world rural practice settings**.

The Large Animal Rural Veterinary Mentoring Program has expanded from **one to four participating institutions**:

- Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
- Otterbein University
- University of Findlay
- Wilmington College

CONNECTING WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES

Protect OHIO visited communities across Ohio to gather input on the rural veterinary workforce shortage. Town halls in **Wooster, Findlay, Wilmington and Nelsonville** brought together **150+ community members, farmers, producers, alumni, business and government leaders and academic partners** to share feedback and strengthen collaboration.

SPRING 2026 REGIONAL TOWN HALLS



- **FARM JOURNAL FOUNDATION REPORT** Through a partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Protect OHIO helped advance an assessment report on Ohio's rural veterinary workforce. The report positions Ohio as a leader in addressing workforce shortages and summarizes findings from key stakeholders.
- **STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS** Focus groups with key stakeholders including Ohio Dairy Veterinarians, Midwest Veterinary Conference attendees and veterinary students helped identify factors contributing to the large animal veterinary shortage and inform potential solutions.
- **VETERINARY SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM OUTREACH** Through webinars, event outreach, educational materials and direct consultation with veterinarians, Protect OHIO increased awareness of the Veterinary Services Grant Program, contributing to two Ohio clinics applying for funding in 2026, the first applications from the state since 2018.

STRENGTHENING OHIO'S DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Protecting Ohio's agricultural industry through proactive disease monitoring

The center is already addressing emerging infectious diseases and strengthening preparedness through research, outreach and monitoring of critical infectious diseases most relevant to Ohio animal agriculture and public health. These activities include developing enhanced biosecurity plans for poultry and swine producers and working closely with OSU Extension, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the State Veterinarian's Office and commodity groups to prepare Ohio for the threat of New World Screwworm.