



New York Farm Bureau
Renée St. Jacques, Assistant Director
P.518.431.5616
rstjacques@nyfb.org

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 3842 (Senator Ritchie) / Assembly Bill 4636 (Assemblyman Magee)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION LAW, IN RELATION TO CREATING A REGENTS LARGE ANIMAL VETERINARIAN LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Date: 1/21/2018

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm advocacy organization, requests your support for this important legislation. If enacted, this bill would establish a loan forgiveness program for large animal veterinarians, who graduate from a New York State college or university, as an incentive to remain in the state to serve high-need areas.

Large animal veterinarians, such as those who care for dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine, poultry, horses, etc., play an integral role in the New York agriculture industry. Unfortunately, since 1990, the number of veterinarians specializing in large animal veterinary care has dropped to fewer than 4,500 from nearly 6,000, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AVMA also estimates that such doctors now make up less than 10 percent of private practice veterinarians nationwide. Left unchecked, this situation could have serious consequences not only for the well-being of farmers and animals, but also potentially for food safety and the impact of non-native diseases like avian influenza.

When veterinary students graduate from school, they often have over \$100,000 in student loans. This debt load may make them less likely to take a veterinary position in a high-needs area. This legislation is a win-win because it would provide critical funds needed for student loan repayment, as well as veterinary care in high-needs area. This legislation is needed to help attract and retain individuals as large animal veterinarians within the state.

For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau respectfully requests your support of this legislation.