

Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research 2022 Veterinary Student Research Fellowships

Key Dates

Program Open for Applications: Feb. 16th

Applications Due: March 30th

Applicants Notified of Status: Early Summer

BACKGROUND

Veterinary medicine is critical to addressing global challenges that include nutritional security, environmental sustainability, and public health. Several of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals (including 1: No Poverty and 2: Zero Hunger) are unattainable without livestock health programs and research. In addition, research at the interface of food-animal production and the medical sciences is critical to understanding - and preventing - emerging disease threats.

Veterinarians need to be more involved in challenges ranging from climate change to pandemic prevention; yet veterinary students have limited opportunities to gain experience in the research approaches that will be used to address these issues. The FFAR Veterinary Research Fellowships provides support for veterinary students to gain experience in these areas of research, preparing them for a variety of important careers in science and public service.

FFAR's Veterinary Student Research Fellowships were developed to integrate with existing CVM summer research student programs and culminate in the widely attended Veterinary Scholars Symposium. The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) is collaborating with FFAR to design and administer the Fellowship program.

RESEARCH TOPICS SUPPORTED

The FFAR Vet Fellows program will support student research including, but not limited, to the following:

- Agricultural economics
- Nutritional security and food access
- Environmental sustainability of agriculture
- Advanced technologies including gene-editing, precision breeding and microbiome/metagenomics in food production
- Zoonotic diseases and pandemic prevention (must have a food and agriculture interface)
- Antimicrobial stewardship and antimicrobial (must have a food and agriculture interface)

ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to domestic and international students currently enrolled in a DVM or VMD degree program conducting research with a qualified mentor at an [AAVMC member institution](#).

Ineligible Students: Students currently enrolled in or that have completed an advanced research degree such as an MS, PhD or MPH are not eligible for consideration. FFAR and AAVMC strongly encourage applications from students without prior research experience.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: FFAR and AAVMC strongly encourage students from historically underrepresented backgrounds in agriculture to apply. For the purposes of this program, FFAR will use AAVMC's definition of diversity as encompassing “many dimensions, including, but not limited to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, language, cognitive style, nationality, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other forms of differences, both visible and invisible.” In defining diversity, it is also incumbent to acknowledge the concept of intersectionality; no single dimension of diversity exists in isolation. We acknowledge that each individual is a reflection of multiple diversity dimensions.

URVM Definition: Historically, AAVMC has identified and recognized the presence of specific historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) whose advancement in the veterinary medical profession has been disproportionately impacted due to legal, cultural, or social climate impediments in the United States. The specific dimensions are: gender, race, ethnicity (African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians, Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage.”

Updated Nomination Process: Program Directors at Colleges of Veterinary Medicine are no longer required to submit nominations. There is no restriction on the number of applicants per institution. A letter of support from the Program Director at the mentor's institution will be required as part of the application package. Program Directors are requested to ensure that applicants(s) is in good academic standing and are integrated into the summer research program at their institution, if awarded.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Fellowships will provide stipend support for up to fifteen (**15**) students per year to perform research with a qualified mentor and to participate in the Veterinary Scholars Symposium Research may be performed at any time within one year from receipt of award; it is anticipated that most students will complete their project during the summer months. Participation in the Veterinary Scholars Symposium, either the year of or year following receipt of the award, is required.

Research need not be performed at the mentor's institution. Research may be conducted off-site, including internationally, if within the budget requirements. All research must be conducted in accordance with the research compliance requirements (i.e., IACUC approval) of the mentor's institution as well as the institution where research is conducted, if conducted off-site. If human subjects are involved, the student should be trained in culturally appropriate methods to reach the target population and the mentor must have IRB approval for the project.

Students may be requested to participate in a roundtable discussion with other students organized by FFAR and conducted virtually or at the VSS. All students must complete an AAVMC survey on their experience at the conclusion of the Fellowship.

FUNDING

FFAR will provide the following funds:

- \$8,000 student trainee support per award (stipend and travel/registration)
- \$2,000 research support per award (supplies and equipment)
- \$10,000 total

Matching funds are not required for this program. Funds must be used for student support and any reasonable travel and accommodations associated with access to research sites. All funds must be used within one year from receipt.

FFAR funds will be provided at the start date of the award and must be used specifically for the designated student's stipend, supplies and participation in the VSS (registration, travel and accommodations). Funds may be used anytime within one year of the project start date; any remaining funds one year later must be returned. The AAVMC will disperse FFAR funds directly to the host institution for each student selected.

APPLICATION KEY DATES

Program Open for Applications: February 16th

Deadline for Applications: March 30th

Successful Applicants Notified: Approximately Early Summer

APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must be submitted through FFAR's online [Grant Management System](#). Applications not submitted through this portal will not be considered eligible for evaluation. To be fair to all our applicants, FFAR will not grant an extension to applicants who missed the deadlines posted in the Key Dates section.

To start a new application, please click [here](#). If you are a new user, register for an account by clicking the "Create Account" button located under the email address field on the left side of the home page. Once you log in, you may begin working on your application. Please be sure to save your work often. To access a saved application, please do so through your [Grant Management Account](#).

1. Institutional Contact Information
2. Additional Information:
 - a. Student Information
 - b. Mentor Information
 - c. Program Director Information

Applicants are encouraged to work with their prospective Mentors and/or Program Directors to answer the questions below. **A letter of support from the Program Director at the mentor's institution will be required as part of the application package.** Program Directors are requested to ensure that applicants(s) is in good academic standing and are integrated into the summer research program at their institution, if awarded. Applicants are required to submit their applications by March 30th, 2022.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What is your [the student's] hypothesis? (50 words)
2. What are your research objectives? (50 words)
3. What skills will you gain? (100 words)
4. What types of data will you collect and how will it be analyzed? (50 words)
5. Describe your prior research experience. [We encourage applicants who are new to research]. (100 words)
6. What are your career interests and aspirations? Why are you interested in the proposed research topic? (100 words)
7. How will you [the student] contribute to diversity in the veterinary and/or agricultural sciences? (100 words)
 - a. For the purposes of this program, FFAR will use AAVMC's definition of diversity as encompassing "many dimensions, including, but not limited to gender, gender

identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, language, cognitive style, nationality, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other forms of differences, both visible and invisible. In defining diversity, it is also incumbent to acknowledge the concept of intersectionality; no single dimension of diversity exists in isolation. We acknowledge that each individual is a reflection of multiple diversity dimensions.

- b. URVM Definition: Historically, AAVMC has identified and recognized the presence of specific historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) whose advancement in the veterinary medical profession has been disproportionately impacted due to legal, cultural, or social climate impediments in the United States. The specific dimensions are: gender, race, ethnicity (African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians, Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage.”
8. Please describe whether the project will involve travel, in-person work or be conducted virtually, and any other logistics of which the reviewers should be aware. (50 words)
9. What is the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution? (100 words)
10. What other (non-research) activities are planned? Briefly describe any extracurricular activities associated with the summer research program (e.g., journal clubs, research seminars, training workshops). (50 words)

APPLICANT EVALUATION:

Total 30 points: 10 pts per section by using the reviewer scale below.

- 1 - Unacceptable: An incomplete or out of scope report. Almost no strengths.
- 2 - Poor: A low impact report with very few strengths and numerous weaknesses.
- 3 - Marginal: A low impact report with few strengths and some major weaknesses.
- 4 - Fair: A low impact report with some strengths but at least one major weakness.
- 5 - Satisfactory: A medium impact report with some strengths and some moderate weaknesses.
- 6 - Good: A medium impact report with many strengths but at least one moderate weakness.
- 7 - Very Good: A strong report with medium impact but numerous minor weaknesses.
- 8 - Excellent: A very strong, high impact report with some minor weaknesses.
- 9 - Outstanding: An extremely strong, high impact report with negligible minor weaknesses.
- 10 - Exceptional: An exceptionally strong, high impact report with essentially no weaknesses.

Research Plan: 10 pts possible

1. Is the student’s hypothesis clear, evidence-based and testable?
2. Are the research objectives clearly outlined and designed to generate informative data that will test the hypothesis?
3. Will the student gain important skills (including “soft skills”) for long-term success?
4. Are the plans for data collection and analysis appropriate within the confines of a student project (i.e. limited time and expertise)?

Applicant Merit: 10 pts possible

5. Does the student have significant prior research experience? [We encourage applicants who are new to research].
6. Are the student's career interests and aspirations consistent with the goals of the program to support the next generation of veterinary scientists in agriculture?
7. Will the student contribute to diversity in agricultural sciences?

Mentor and Institutional Support: 10 pts possible

8. Are the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution appropriate for the student and the project?
9. Are the non-research / extracurricular activities associated with the summer research program (e.g., journal clubs, research seminars, training workshops) appropriate?
10. Does the project will involve travel, in-person work or be conducted virtually, and any other logistics of which the reviewers should be aware. **Informational only, not scored.**