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Thank You for coming to Wayne Count Senators. I was asked to speak at this hearing by the Farm Bureau on the subject of the shortage of large animal veterinarians in Pennsylvania. I am a 1984 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. I am the immediate past president of the Wayne County Agricultural Extension Board. I am a member of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association, in which I served as President and Trustee. I am a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Bovine Practitioners.

Why is there a shortage of large animal veterinarians? I think that for this discussion I would refer to the shortage as a shortage of Rural Veterinarians. Since graduation I have engaged in mixed animal practice(both large and small animal) . As farms get larger they use veterinarians in different ways and the distance between farms becomes greater. Consolidation is leading to fewer farms ; a reduction of up to 80% by 2020. Fewer students are choosing large animal medicine because there is less familiarity with farms. The life-work balance and salary for a large animal practice are much less desirable than suburban small animal practice.(ie there is no emergency clinic to send that cow to that's having a difficult birth or the horse with colic) . Student debt is growing so that it has become impractical to go into large animal medicine and be able to service the debt. This is especially acute in Pennsylvania because our veterinarian school is a private institution and is always in an uphill battle seeking funding.

New graduates entering food animal production medicine make about what a dental hygienist makes. About 6 % of graduates enter large animal medicine and 50% leave within 5 years(Fetrow et al Dairy Production Medicine 2004 Bovine Practitioner). The number of 18 to 24-year-olds, the pool for potential candidates for veterinary school, will decrease from 30 million to 20 million in the next decade. (Pew veterinary Education Program 1998). There is a projected 6.86% shortfall in veterinarians entering a career in Federal animal health careers which covers food safety, bioterrorism and epidemiology.(Price et al JAVMA 2006).

What are some possible solutions? Student loan forgiveness for those going into practice in underserved areas, great idea that has been enacted on the federal level but has

never been implemented nor properly funded. The state of Pennsylvania should make grants available to students at the University of Pennsylvania that intend to practice large animal medicine. The University of Pennsylvania is losing these candidates to other states with lower tuition. Do everything possible to save the small family farms in Pennsylvania so we have a pool of students that are familiar with large animal medicine. Make small farms more profitable so they can afford to pay for veterinary care and advice.

I would like to enter into testimony an article from Hoard's Dairyman of March 25 2007.

As a veterinarian and a product of a small family farm I would like to suggest the three following reasons that you should do everything in your power to preserve the small farms of Pennsylvania.

- 1) Concentrating large numbers of cattle in one place is inviting environmental disaster.
- 2) Pennsylvania topography doesn't lend itself to large farms, so the alternative in Pennsylvania is no farms or housing developments.
- 3) Large farms require cheap labor, thus fueling the illegal immigration problem.