

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced Friday the next phase of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. We are pleased that they are making progress on the program, and are confident that veterinarians will be participating in the fall.

The announcement made last Friday was to communicate the designated shortage areas (the underserved areas that were selected by USDA from the applicants received by the State Animal Health officials) and the Request for Applicants. Information about the program can be found at [VMLRP](#). Information about the designated shortage areas can be found at [VMLRP Designated Shortage Situations](#). Finally, application materials can be found at: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/an_health_if_vmlrp_forms.html.

NIFA is holding two hour webinars for potential applicants on Tuesday May 4, 2010 at 10 am and 4 pm eastern time, and Wednesday May 12, 2010 at 10 am and 4:00pm eastern time. These webinars will go over the loan repayment program application process, and there will be a Q&A for potential applicants. Each webinar is open up to a max of 75 slots—there is the potential for additional webinars based on the demand. They are encouraging groups (such as the veterinary schools) to participate in the webinars in large lecture halls, so that multiple people can participate via one connection. More information can be found at: [VMLRP Webinars](#).

ISVMA Legislative Update - House Bill 5377 Passed by Legislature

The ISVMA introduced amendments to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act of 2004 have passed passed both the House of Representatives and Senate and will now be considered for final approval by the Governor. A [summary of the changes](#) made by House Bill 5377 is available online for your review.

[House Bill 5377](#) passed unanimously with strong support from ISVMA members who contacted their legislators using the ISVMA Legislative Advocacy Network.

ISVMA LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

Please Thank Your Legislators & Ask Governor Quinn to Approve HB5377

Please take a few seconds to:

1. Send a [note of thanks](#) to your legislators for supporting House bill 5377; and
2. [Request Governor Quinn's approval](#) of the bill so that it will become law.

ISVMA legislative alerts can always be accessed in the ISVMA Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/isvma/home/>.

The changes recommended by the ISVMA to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act of 2004 were passed unanimously by the Illinois General Assembly. House Bill 5377 passed the House of Representatives 114-0-0 on 3/18/2010 and the Illinois State Senate 53-0-0 on 4/28/2010. The bill must now be approved by Governor Quinn to become state law.

There were many important and needed changes in this legislation and it puts ISVMA in a strong position on future negotiations on more controversial issues that still should be addressed in the law.

FDA Issues Warning About Dog Bones

(April 21, 2010 - USA Today) The Food and Drug Administration warns consumers against feeding dogs bones, saying it is an unsafe practice and can trigger serious injuries to pets. [An article from USA Today](#) outlines the 10 reasons why the agency considers the practice a bad idea.

Article on Raw Food Diet Debate

(April 24, 2010 - ZooToo.com) The issue of feeding raw-meat diets to pets remains a subject of debate between those who contend that processed foods are not what pets are programmed to eat and those who argue that uncooked foods carry the risks of salmonella poisoning, parasitic diseases and nutritional deficiencies.

"As pet owners reeled from the melamine contamination of some commercial brands of pet foods in 2007, many switched to a raw diet for their dogs or cats. But did those pet owners jump out of the frying pan and into the fire?" ...[Read more](#)

AVMA Creates New Web-based Externship Locator to Help Veterinary Students Research Educational Opportunities

(SCHAUMBURG, Ill.) April 20, 2010— The nation's first, centralized [Veterinary Externship Locator](#) was announced by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AVMA created the new computer program in an effort to help

veterinary students find externship opportunities.

Most veterinary students take an externship—a short, off-site work/educational program—during veterinary school to augment their studies. In fact, they've become such an essential component of veterinary education that many veterinary schools require all students take at least one to graduate.

"Externships are important, real-world learning opportunities for veterinary students," explains Dr. Larry R. Corry, AVMA president. "Anything we can do to assist our students to find externships that interest and challenge them will help them develop into better veterinarians, which is a service to our members, veterinary medicine and also to the community."

While externships have grown drastically more popular over the past decade, students report they can be hard to find.

"The Veterinary Externship Locator is a great example of the AVMA being responsive to the needs of our members," explains Dr. Kevin Dajka, director of the AVMA Membership and Field Services Division, which created and oversees the new Veterinary Externship Locator. "Externships are increasingly popular among our student members because they help them learn to apply what they've learned in veterinary school, make friends and mentors, and also they help them develop career goals."

The service currently lists hundreds of externships from across the country, including descriptions of the opportunities and contact information. These resources can be sorted and accessed by state, school, special interest or organization. The new AVMA system also links to existing state and veterinary school externship databases, and in states where state veterinary medical associations don't offer any externship assistance, the AVMA Student Externship Locator offers a "Find a Vet" tool to help students with the research to find an externship on their own.

For more information about the AVMA Veterinary Career Center and the new Student Externship Locator, please visit www.avma.org/vcc. For any other information about veterinary medicine, please visit www.avma.org.

About the Photo

The [Chipping Sparrow](#) (*Spizella passerina*) is a small sparrow that is relatively common within its North American range.

Throughout the year, adults are gray below and a rust color above. Adults in alternate (breeding) plumage have a reddish cap, a nearly white supercilium, and a black trans-ocular line (running through the eye). Adults in basic (non-breeding) plumage are less prominently marked, with a brownish cap, a dusky eyebrow, and a dark eye-line. Juvenile Chipping Sparrows are prominently streaked below. Like non-breeding adults, they show a dark eye-line, extending both in front of and behind the eye. The brownish cap and dusky eyebrow are variable but generally obscure in juveniles.

In eastern North America, Chipping Sparrows breed in woodlands, farmlands, and suburban and urban districts. In western North America, the Chipping Sparrow prefers conifer forests for breeding. The Chipping Sparrow is partially migratory, with almost all mid-latitude and high-latitude breeders withdrawing in winter to the southern United States and Mexico. On the wintering grounds and during migration, Chipping Sparrows are gregarious, forming tight flocks with other Chipping Sparrows or loose assemblages with other species such as Eastern Bluebirds and Pine Warblers.

In early spring, the first migrants return from their wintering grounds in March, but the bulk of migrants arrives throughout April. Males set up territories right away, and their trilled songs make them conspicuous. Breeding begins as early as April, but again, most nesting activity occurs from late April to early May onwards. The Chipping Sparrow's song is a uniform trill. Its call is a hard chip.

Chipping Sparrows forage in flocks, except during the breeding season. They usually forage on or near the ground in open areas near cover. When foraging, they run or hop, stopping often to scratch the ground for seed. The Chipping Sparrow eats mostly seeds, especially in the fall and winter. During the breeding season, they eat a number of crawling insects as well.

Although the Chipping Sparrow is still common and widespread across its range, its population has ebbed and flowed as a result of human influences. Chipping Sparrow populations are negatively influenced by habitat loss, Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism, and competition with House Sparrows and House Finches.

I photographed this Chipping Sparrow in Rochester, IL in the Spring of 2009.

Contact Us

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