

Next Steps for the Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Program Act

The Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Program Act which was signed into law a few weeks ago was the first major hurdle necessary to make state financial support available to veterinarians who agree to serve in areas of critical need.

The regulatory agency responsible for administering the loan will draft rules for implementing the program over the next several months. The ISVMA will be contributing to this process. The rules have to go through a period of public input and then be approved by a non-partisan legislative body called the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. The regulatory agency will also work with the University of Illinois to develop the application process and necessary forms.

ISVMA will also be lobbying Illinois legislators to support an appropriation to fund the program with state revenues. The legislature could not make the appropriation during the recently concluded legislative session because there was no program in place (and the state budget is in critical condition). ISVMA will be lobbying for funding in the next legislative session beginning in January 2010.

ISVMA Issues Press Release on Pet Obesity

Obesity is serious and increasing problem in companion animals. The ISVMA recently issued a [statewide press release](#) in an effort to raise pet owner awareness of the risks associated with pet obesity and the health benefits of working together with their family veterinarian to keep their pets at a healthy weight.

In January, the AVMA and Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc. joined together to help veterinarians and veterinary staff educate clients about the health implications of obesity in cats and dogs. The resulting Alliance for Healthier Pets—Obesity Awareness and Prevention Program has produced a tremendous amount of useful information that can be accessed at <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/feb08/080201a.asp>.

The ISVMA press release is part of the ISVMA Public Relations Committee's information series on key animal and public health issues. All articles, press releases and client information sheets on topics in this series can be downloaded from the online [ISVMA Library](#).

Oct. 11-17 is National Veterinary Technician Week

Veterinary technicians play an integral role in delivering the best medical care possible to animals. The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America will spread this message through its annual National Veterinary Technician Week, Oct. 11-17.

The theme of the week is "Linking the Veterinary Healthcare Team." The focus is on how veterinary technicians work closely with veterinarians, veterinary assistants, practice managers, patients, and owners to provide an important link with all involved in the care process.

Cherylann Gieseke, president of NAVTA, said, "It is important to have this week of recognition to reinforce the value and professionalism of veterinary technicians to both veterinarians and the public."

Gieseke also mentioned that the week is a time for NAVTA to stress the health care team aspect of veterinary medicine.

"If all members of the health care team perform the functions they are educated to perform, both animals and people benefit," she said.

NAVTA has proclaimed the third week of each October to be National Veterinary Technician Week. Hill's Pet Nutrition is sponsoring the celebration, which includes a poster campaign.

More information about NAVTA and this event can be found at www.navta.net.

Courtesy AVMA

About the Photo

The [Black-bellied Plover](#) (*Pluvialis squatarola*) is a medium-sized shorebird of coastal beaches. In spring and summer (late April or May to August), the adults are strikingly beautiful with black and white on the back and wings. The face and neck are black with a white border and they have a black breast and a white rump. The tail is white with black barring. The bill and legs are black. They molt to winter plumage in mid August to early September and retain this plumage until April. This basic (non-breeding) plumage is a fairly plain grey above, with a grey-speckled breast and white belly.

Black-bellied Plovers breed exclusively on the tundra of northwestern Alaska and Arctic Canada. They spend winters mainly along the coasts of North America from British Columbia and Massachusetts southward. During winter, they are commonly found on beaches, mudflats, marshes, lakeshores, and plowed fields. They can actually be found on six different continents during the winter season!

The Black-bellied Plover is the only American plover that has a hind toe on its foot. The hind toe, however, is so small that it is difficult to see in the field. They are usually the first to take flight when a flock of shorebirds is approached. When disturbed, they tend to fly out over water, circle, and land again behind the observer.

I photographed this basic plumaged Black-bellied Plover near Monterey, California in October 2007.

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