

Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research 2024 Veterinary Student Research Fellowship

Match is optional for this funding opportunity

Key Dates

Program Open for Application: Thursday, February 15, 2024

Full Applications Due: Thursday, March 27, 2024 by 5:00 PM ET

Award Notification: Early Summer 2024

Project Timeline: Summer 2024 – August 2025

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 Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) Veterinary Student Research Fellowship (FFAR Vet Fellows program) 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 Fellowship was developed to integrate with existing College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) summer research student programs and culminate in the widely attended Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). The American Association of 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 both quantitative and qualitative student research including, but not limited, to the following:

- Agricultural economics, socioeconomics, spatial analysis and computational modeling
- 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 (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 who 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, and Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage."

Application Submission Process: 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 applicant(s) is in good academic standing and are integrated into the summer research program at their institution, if awarded. There is no restriction on the number of applicants per institution.

Program Structure

The Fellowships will provide stipend support for up to 15 students for one year to perform research with a qualified mentor and to participate in the Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). 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 VSS, 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

A total of \$10,000 will be provided to each selected student. Funds may be allocated according to the individual needs of the student, but a general breakdown is as follows:

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

Matching funds are optional for this program. 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 (including, but not limited to, 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. Funds will be dispersed directly to the institution of the selected student by AAVMC.

Application Components

Applicants must submit the application using FFAR'S Grant Management System. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

Required online application components

- Grantee (Organization) Information
 - Geographic location (profit status, tax ID, duns number, city, state, congressional district) of the applicant organization.
 - Authorized Organizational Representative (name, affiliation, contact information)
 - Grant Administrator (name, affiliation, contact information)
 - Press Contact (name, affiliation, contact information)
- Contact Information
 - Program Director (name, affiliation, contact information)
 - Mentor (name, affiliation, contact information)
 - Student (name, affiliation, contact information)
 - AAVMC Demographic Survey
- Proposal Information
 - Project Title
 - Project Duration (start and end dates, total months)
 - Geographic location (city, state, congressional district) where the proposed research will be conducted.
 - What is your [the student's] hypothesis? (50 words)
 - What are your research objectives? (100 words)
 - What skills will you gain? (100 words)
 - What types of data will you collect and how will it be analyzed? (100 words)
 - Describe your prior research experience. [We encourage applicants who are new to research]. (100 words)

- What are your career interests and aspirations? Why are you interested in the proposed research topic? (100 words)
- How will you [the student] contribute to diversity in the veterinary and/or agricultural sciences? (100 words)
 - 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, and Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage.”
- 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)
- What is the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution? (100 words)
- Organization Assurances
- Required Attachment: Failure to provide this attachment will disqualify the application.
 - Letter of Support from the Program Director: 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.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted by the deadline date through FFAR’s online application Grant Management System. Applications submitted outside of this System will not be considered.

To start a **new** application, please click [here](#). If you are a new user, register for an account by clicking “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 by clicking on “Save and Finish Later.” To access a saved application, please do so through your [Grant Management Account](#).

Only applications submitted by the deadline through FFAR’s Grant Management System will be accepted and considered eligible for evaluation. To be fair to all applicants, FFAR will not grant extensions to applicants who missed the deadlines posted in the Key Dates section.

Additional Information

Review Process

Applications undergo a two-tiered review process. First, a panel of three to six external peer reviewers assesses the technical merit and feasibility of the proposal. Then an advisory committee, including program sponsors, considers the reviewer comments to evaluate which proposals fit best with program objectives.

All external reviewers must agree to and adhere to the terms outlined in 'FFAR's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). FFAR makes reasonable efforts to ensure that applications are not assigned to reviewers with a potential conflict with the applicant, institution or project personnel. Reviewers with a conflict of interest are recused from evaluating or participating in the related discussions. Each stage of the review is conducted confidentially, and as such, FFAR is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of the contents of the applications.

Scoring

Total of 30 points possible: 10 points per section

Score per section	Qualitative Assessment
0 - 2	Poor
3 - 5	Good
6 - 8	Excellent
9 - 10	Exceptional

Evaluation Criteria

All applications will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with FFAR policies. Applications then will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Research Plan (10 points)**
 - Is the student's hypothesis clear, evidence-based and testable?
 - Are the research objectives clearly outlined and designed to generate informative data that will test the hypothesis?
 - Will the student gain important skills (including "soft skills") for long-term success?
 - Are the plans for data collection and analysis appropriate within the confines of a student project (i.e. limited time and expertise)?
- **Applicant Merit (20 points)**
 - Does the student have significant prior research experience? [We encourage applicants who are new to research].
 - 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?
 - Will the student contribute to diversity in agricultural sciences?
- **Mentor and Institutional Support (10 points)**
 - Does the project involve travel, in-person work or will it be conducted virtually?
Are there any other logistics of which the reviewers should be aware?
Informational only, not scored.
 - Are the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution appropriate for the student and the project?

Award Administration

Selection & Award Notice: Following the application review process, FFAR will send a letter via email to the student applicant, mentor, and the authorized organization representative (AOR) regarding their application status. All notifications will be sent by Early Summer 2024. After FFAR notifies the selected students, mentors, and AORs, AAVMC manages the funding distribution process. AAVMC will coordinate with the institutions and the fellowship funds will be sent directly to the AORs.

If an application is selected for funding, FFAR and AAVMC reserve the right to request additional or clarifying information for any necessary reason. Potential grantees are free to accept or reject the Fellowship Award as offered.

Post-award Management

Final Report Requirements: In lieu of a written report, students are required to attend and present their research at the Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). Students may choose to present the same year as they receive funding or wait until the following year. If for any reason the student is unable to attend VSS, please reach out to the programmatic contact.

Scientific Integrity: FFAR strives to advance knowledge and the application of science to address challenges related to food supply and sustainable agriculture. FFAR's ability to pursue its mission depends on the integrity of the funded science projects and programs. All FFAR grants must be conducted with the highest standards of scientific integrity.

Contact Information

For programmatic questions, please contact Nikki Dutta, Scientific Program Officer at ndutta@foundationfar.org.

For questions related to the online submission system, please contact FFAR's Grant Management team at grants@foundationfar.org.

For questions related to fellowship funds and funding distribution, please contact Brooklind Norman, AAVMC Program Coordinator at BNorman@aavmc.org.

FFAR strives to respond to inquiries within two business days, but our response time depends on the volume of questions received and the complexity of the questions asked. Please note that we do not monitor mailboxes on evenings, weekends or federal holidays.