

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6187

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating the food animal veterinarian conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Rasmussen, Schoesler, Morton, Murray and Kohl-Welles.

Senate Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Background: Two hundred and eight food animal veterinarians currently practice in Washington serving approximately 1,203,750 total food animals. This equates to 5,787 food animals per food animal veterinarian. A shortage of food animal veterinarians has been recognized nationwide by the federal government and a number of states. Since April 2007, eight states have established special financial aid programs encouraging students to practice food animal medicine and four other states have pending legislation.

The Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences is the largest department in Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. The department is organized into four divisions: small animal; equine; food animal; and clinical support services. Three hundred eighty eight students are in the College of Veterinary Medicine during the 2007-08 academic year with 93 students in the graduating class. The average veterinary student graduates with a debt of over \$90,000.

Summary: The food animal veterinarian conditional scholarship program is created. The program is administered by the Washington State University (WSU). Students may receive the scholarship if they are registered for at least six credit hours, are making satisfactory academic progress, have declared a major in veterinary medicine, and declare an intention to practice veterinary medicine in Washington emphasizing food animal medicine. The scholarship may not exceed the amount of resident tuition and fees at the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine, the cost of room, board, laboratory fees and supplies, and books, for up to five years.

WSU establishes a selection committee to screen and select recipients. The selection criteria must emphasize factors demonstrating a sustained interest in food animals and serving the needs of Washington's agricultural communities. Criteria must also address the need for food animal veterinarians in diverse areas of the state.

A recipient must repay the amount of the conditional scholarship, with interest, if the recipient fails to be employed as a food animal veterinarian in Washington a year for each year of scholarship received. The person must devote at least 50 percent to large production animal veterinary practice to be considered a food animal veterinarian. WSU is responsible for collecting repayments.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	94	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 12, 2008