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# NEWSLETTER



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Exec. Vice President National Association of Federal Veterinarians 1910 Sunderland Pl., N.W Washington, D.C. 20036-1608

Any veterinarian employed full-time by the federal government may become an active member. Dues are \$260.00 annually, payable annually, semiannually, via PayPal (annually or monthly), or by federal pay- roll deductions (eligibility for payroll deduction is limited to USDA veterinarians of \$10.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS)). Uniformed veterinarians' dues are \$160.00 annually. Active-duty uniformed veterinarians- please contact the NAFV office.

Associate membership is granted to active members when they retire from federal service. Associate members pay no dues. Associate members receive the NAFV newsletter by email.

The National Association of Federal Veterinarians is a non-profit corporation and the purposes for which it is formed are to promote the veterinary profession, to improve the professional efficiency and material interests of the members, to acquaint the public with the activities of veterinarians in the federal service, and to cooperate with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Animal Health Association and other similar groups with common interests.

Editor: NAFV Newsletter Committee

[nafv@nafv.org](mailto:nafv@nafv.org)

Send address changes to Federal Veterinarian 1910 Sunderland Pl., N.W. Washington, DC 20036-1608

Tel:(202)223-4878 | Fax:(202)842-4360

Email: [nafv@nafv.org](mailto:nafv@nafv.org)

Website: [www.nafv.org](http://www.nafv.org)

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## The Role of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) measures employee engagement and satisfaction with their workplaces, or in other words morale. The FEVS serves as a tool for employees to share their perceptions in many critical areas including their work experiences, their agency, and their leadership. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and its Office of Employee Experience (OEX) use the results of FEVS to inform efforts and the initiatives currently underway with the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" ranking according to the Partnership for Public Service on employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale—all of which support and inform USDA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's FY2022 priority to "Make USDA a Best Place to Work."

And this is where an association such as the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) can come in. Today's veterinarians are the only doctors educated to protect the health of both animals and people. These dedicated professionals apply their medical skills not in "private practice" but in "public practice" in the service of every American through the many programs administered by the federal government. Though federal veterinarians touch the lives of every American every day, many feel under-compensated, underappreciated, and overworked. These feelings can contribute to high employee turnover rates, which impact overall morale of the team, the health and wellness of Americans, and the agency's bottom line. Many times, there are significant gaps between the perceptions of an agency's executive leadership and the realities of mid-level management. This can be even worse when including agencies rank and file grassroots employees.

The majority of NAFV members (and most of the veterinarians employed by the federal government) work for the USDA. The results of FEVS indicated that morale is low, ranked 16 of 17 large federal agencies, only slightly better than the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). When you look at the sub-agency rankings our major membership comes from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (ranked 298 out of 411) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (ranked 294 out of 411). For those working there, this may not come as a surprise. But, how can these agencies benefit from working with NAFV, as an association of managers and supervisors? There are finer points of job satisfaction that the FEVS cannot measure. The impact of mandatory deployments on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that deployment is seen as furthering the mission of the agency, it can be a positive motivating factor; however, if that mandatory deployment is seen as making up for an agency's failure to fill critical vacancies, it has just the opposite effect on morale.

When deployments are viewed as employed where certain individuals seem to be exempt from deployment, then it can destroy the sense of accomplishment. This level of detail can't be reached by the FEVS, but through consultations with our members and executive leadership, these insights can be addressed. In many cases, just hearing a third party explain the situation can make all the difference in how the issue is perceived. In service of these public servants, the NAFV strives to serve both veterinarians and the agencies they work for by facilitating communication, making suggestions for improvements, and working collaboratively to address issues of concern. This advocacy includes emphasizing professionalism and expertise in federal service but also promoting continuing education, teamwork and morale, and a standard of excellence. NAFV can work with you to improve it and your professional working environment.

NAFV can approach senior leadership in the department with your concerns and possible solutions, not as a union but as an organization that represent you medical / scientific professionals. Our goal is to enhance your work life's productivity and impact, instilling a positive sense of accomplishment. When a veterinarian is lifted, that positively reflects the team, and that morale boost translates into increased productivity and pride in your work which makes all the difference.



# AVMA VETERINARY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

## Eliminating in-person VCPR requirement for telemedicine, proposed midlevel position discussed at information forum

Veterinarians, patients would see more risk than reward with proposed changes to practice

Some proposals for change in the veterinary profession that have garnered attention in the past few years would create more risk than reward. One is the idea of a midlevel position (MLP) that would overlap the roles of the veterinarian and veterinary technician. It remains unclear what the scope of practice would be and how it would address workforce shortages. The other proposal is to eliminate the requirement to establish veterinarian-

-technician-patient relationship (VCPR) in person for telemedicine, which has been adopted in very few states. These topics were discussed during the AVMA House of Delegates' (HOD) Veterinary Information Forum, which took place during the HOD's regular winter session, held in conjunction with the AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference, January 5-6 in Chicago. Several AVMA staff, allied organization leaders, and subject matter experts presented on these topics, as well as on future veterinary workforce needs and approaches to addressing recruitment and retention challenges in specific segments of the profession.



Dr. Janet Donlin, AVMA CEO, explained it is important for the profession to have diverse voices talk about these topics, as well as accurate information and reliable data.

“The challenge is, when it gets in the legislative arena, if (legislators) don't have good accurate information there, crazy things can happen,” she said. “It is up to you as veterinary leaders to make sure your state hears good, accurate information.”

Veterinarians, patients would see more risk than reward with proposed changes to practice



**Story by: Malinda Larkin  
Photos by: R Scott Nolen**

# Future Veterinary Workforce Needs

“Unfortunately, suggestions of crisis-level shortages,” said Dr. Gail Golab, associate EVP and chief veterinary officer, “that are based on calculations using challenging single proxy variables and without consideration of context, have precipitated broad-reaching proposals for changes in how veterinary medicine is delivered and regulated; for example, a midlevel position and relaxing the VCPR. These proposals pose substantial risks to animal health and welfare, as well as to public health.”

Large-scale, disruptive macroeconomic events over the past several years have presented no shortage of challenges for the veterinary profession: The Great Recession of 2007 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The former decreased demand for veterinary services, while the other increased it for companion animals; but both temporarily. While national veterinary practice revenue increased an average of 5.7% between August 2021 and August 2023, the number of client visits fell 2.7% during the same time period.



Dr. Lori Teller, AVMA's immediate past president and clinical professor at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, says telemedicine can be a component of improving access to care but most animals that do not receive regular care have acute issues that need to be addressed with an in-person visit.

“The estimates currently circulating around veterinary workforce needs have been derived by using the veterinary services revenue compound annual growth rate as a proxy for demand. This is a challenging choice because, among other things, it doesn't consider the impacts of price and service type,” Dr. Golab said. “As an example, while one veterinary visit may contribute \$100 of revenue and another may contribute \$500 of revenue, that doesn't mean that the second veterinary visit requires five veterinarians, rather than one veterinarian, to deliver the services involved.”

Then, when looking at the supply of veterinarians, it appears the next several years will see an inflection point in the growth rate of new veterinarians entering the profession.

In addition to recent unprecedented growth in the number of veterinary college seats at existing colleges, three new colleges have been added to the roster, veterinary colleges have close to doubled their cohorts to produce additional graduates this decade, and at least 12 new veterinary colleges are in various stages of development. The cumulative effect of these changes will be a significant

increase in the number of veterinarians entering the workforce into the 2030s. Offering telemedicine can be a great way for veterinary clinics to strengthen relationships among practices, clients, and patients as well as improve continuity in patient care and enhance practice efficiency. It is a valuable tool for veterinarians, explained Dr. Lori Teller, AVMA's immediate past president and clinical professor at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Providing detail on the unique aspects of equine and bovine practices, Drs. Katie Garrett, president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), and Fred Gingrich, executive director of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP), spoke about the focused work they are doing to identify and address recruitment and retention barriers.

“Keeping veterinarians in equine practice is perhaps the most significant issue ever faced by our area of the profession,” began Dr. Garrett. Currently only 1.3% of veterinary graduates go directly into equine practice, with another 4.5% going into an equine internship.

# *Dr. Daniel Salmon Award 2023 Recipient*



Dr. R. Mark Simpson is a Senior Scientist appointed under Title 42(f) civilian service in the Laboratory of Cancer Biology and Genetics, Center for Cancer Research, in the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. The scope of Dr. Simpson's current duties and responsibilities in public health within the National Cancer Institute include developing and directing a combined residency and graduate education program with multiple colleges of veterinary medicine and multiple NIH institutes.

This program serves to provide opportunities for graduate veterinarians to obtain NIH-funded research training leading to board certification and a PhD degree within an NIH clinician-scientist training initiative. He conducts the training partnerships with the university graduate programs, recruits, and mentors the veterinarians, as well as provides training in pathology and research experimentation. The program's combined DVM, PhD graduates fill key public health research roles in industry, academia, and government. By advent of these duties and responsibilities, Dr. Simpson is more closely integrating academic veterinary medicine with biomedical research conducted within the National institutes of Health, advancing One Health objectives. Additional duties among Dr. Simpson's responsibilities include credentialing a variety of uniquely original animal models of disease within the Center for Cancer Research for greater human disease translation using the scientific method and clinical diagnostic skills and problem solving. In addition, Dr. Simpson is leading a research initiative to develop novel treatment combinations for a rare subtype of highly aggressive melanoma using a comparative oncology approach.



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# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT TOWNHALL

## Priorities for 2024

- Retention of veterinarians into government service (Specialty pay, locality pay, bonuses, etc.)
- Increase membership and engagement (recruitment tactics, local and regional chapters)
- Consultations with Agencies (USDA, HHS, CDC, DOD)
- Communication with members and expanding social media presence
- Working with other associations (USAHA, ACVPM, AASPHV)

## 2024 Strategy to Accomplish Priorities and Goals

- Increase Membership to remain on the AVMA House of Delegates
- Work closely with AVMA GRD to:
  - Request GAO Audit on Veterinary Workforce Issues
  - Acquire supplemental funding for FSIS and APHIS
  - Establish Pay Cap exemption in Farm Bill
- Ensure language in the Senate Agricultural Appropriations Bill remains in the House version
- Enact a Bill to establish Professional Pay for Veterinarians
- Acquire partial funding for Professional Pay (full implementation will cost over \$300M)

# 2023 Highlights



National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
USAHA/AAVLD  
Annual Meeting



Annual Legislative Fly-in



AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference



Our President, Dr. Cezar-Martinez with our Exec. Vice-Pres, Dr. Anelli

# UNIFORMED VETERINARY MEDICINE ASSOCIATION

## HISTORY OF THE VETERINARY CORPS



The U.S. Army Veterinary Corps was formally established by an Act of Congress on 3 June 1916. However, recognition of the need for veterinary expertise had been evolving since 1776 when General Washington directed that a “regiment of horse with a farrier” be raised. During the War between the States, War Department General Orders provided each Cavalry regiment with a veterinary surgeon in the rank of regimental sergeant-major and pay of \$75 a month. Further recognition of the need for veterinarians evolved after the

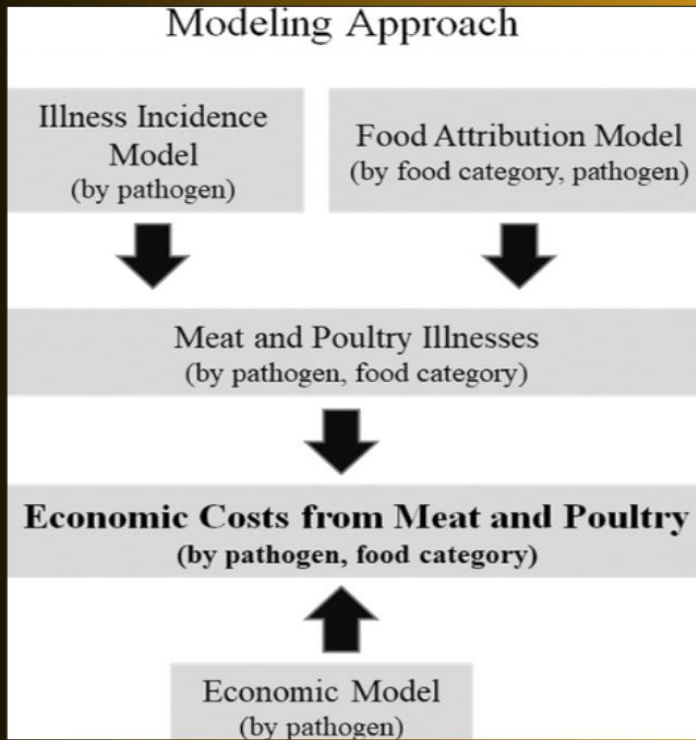
Civil War concluded. In 1875 Congress authorized the Artillery, medicines, and dressings for horses but did not authorize veterinarians, in contrast to their Cavalry counterparts. Congress passed a resolution in 1879 requiring all applicants for veterinary positions with the Cavalry to be graduates of a recognized veterinary college. In the 1890s veterinarians were being sought to inspect meat, poultry, and dairy products destined for the frontier posts. A strong academic background in microbiology, epidemiology, pathology, and public health has always made veterinarians ideally suited for a role in ensuring the wholesomeness of food. The Spanish-American War was pivotal in the evolutionary pathway leading to establishment of the Veterinary Corps. The Army had inadequately prepared for its role in maintaining the health of both its animals and its Soldiers prior to the war. The infamous “embalmed beef” scandal, incorrectly absorbed blame for the loss of numerous American lives. In actuality there was a lack of adequate quality assurance factors which lead directly to the loss of thousands of American lives as well as having rendered even greater numbers of soldiers completely ineffective. The country began demanding that something be done to preclude such catastrophes in the future.



The American Veterinary Medical Association and numerous other individuals began actively supporting legislation directed toward establishment of an Army Veterinary Corps. Finally, as a result of passage of the National Defense Act of 3 June 1916, veterinary officer commissioning became a reality and the Army Surgeon General began the work of organizing this new Corps within the Regular Army. When war was declared in April 1917 there were 57 veterinarians working for the Army, primarily in the area of equine surgery and medicine. Within 18 months the newly established Corps grew to 2,313 officers. Veterinary Corps participation in all of our nation’s conflicts since World War I has been an essential element in the maintenance of the health and well being of both animals and Soldiers. The highly technical education obtained by veterinarians has continued to prepare them for their changing mission requirements for over the past ninety years. In 1979 Congress directed changes to the Department of Defense (DoD) veterinary missions. Effective 31 March 1980 the Air Force Veterinary Corps was disestablished and the Army became the Executive Agent for all DoD veterinary services. Today, the Army Veterinary Corps, composed of 780 veterinarians and warrant officers in both active and the Army Reserves, concludes ninety years of historic achievements about which it can be tremendously proud.



# Food Attribution and Economic Cost Estimates for Meat- and Poultry-Related Illnesses

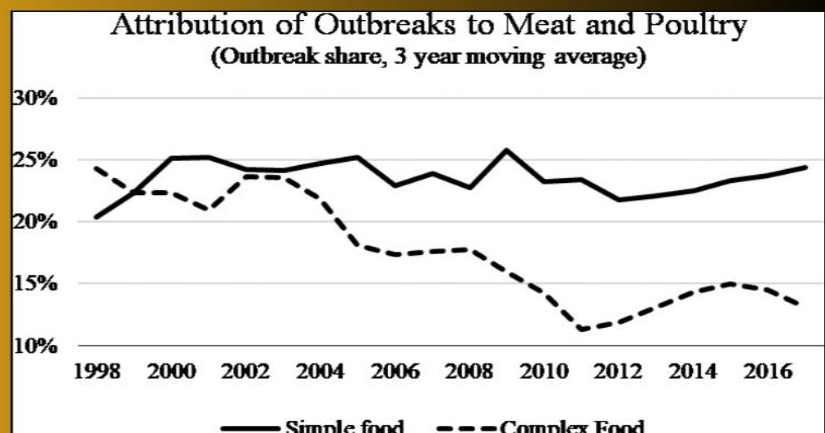


The economic burden of foodborne illness has been estimated to be as high as US\$90 billion annually. Economic burden of foodborne illness estimated at \$90 billion - 2020 study. For policy purposes, it is often important to understand not only the overall cost of illness but also the costs associated with individual products or groups of products. In this study, I estimate the cost of foodborne illnesses from 29 pathogens associated with nongame meat and poultry products that are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. To complete this, I merge results from a food attribution model with results from an illness model and an economic burden of illness model. The food attribution model uses outbreak and expert elicitation data to attribute foods to pathogens. The illness model is a replication of the 2011 study published by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention. The economic cost model is an updated version of previously published studies that include costs for medical care, lost productivity, loss of life, and pain and suffering. The primary attribution model, based largely on Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration assumptions, estimates that meat and poultry products are vectors for 30.9% of all foodborne illnesses. This translates into 2.9 million annual illnesses, yielding economic costs of up to \$20.3 billion. Total meat industry taxes paid =  $\$109,221,187,900 / 300000000 / 109221187900 = 0.2746$  2.7%. Meat and poultry are vectors for 30.9% of foodborne illnesses and 46.6% of costs. This translates into 2.9 million annual illnesses, yielding economic costs of up to \$20.3 billion. The costliest food-pathogen pairs include *Campylobacter* spp. in poultry (\$6.9 billion), *Salmonella* spp.

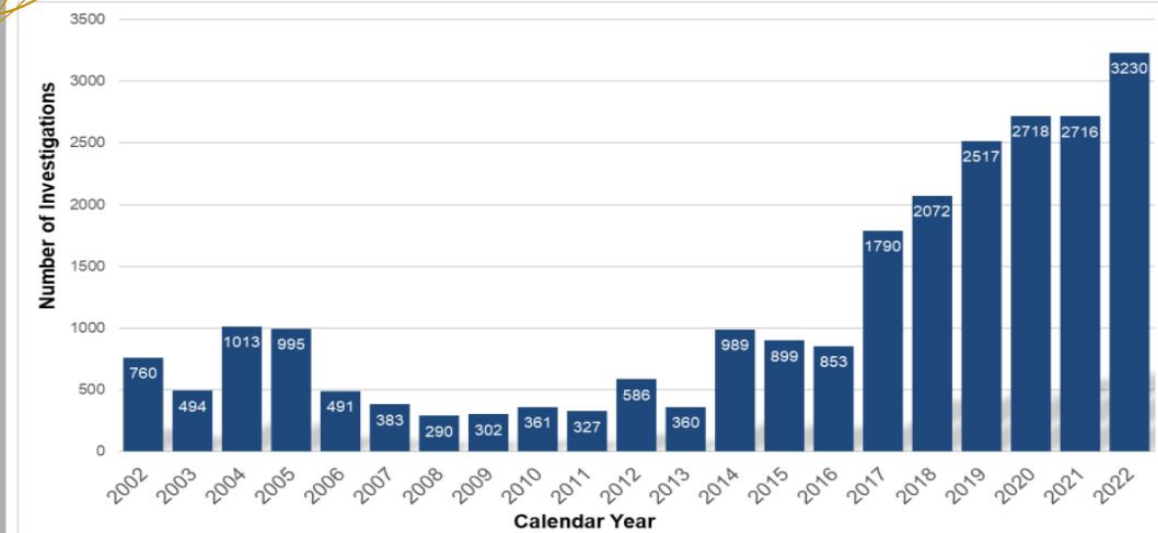
in chicken and pork (\$2.8 and \$1.9 billion, respectively), and *Toxoplasma gondii* in pork (\$1.9 billion). Results based on alternative attribution and economic model assumptions are also presented, generating meat and poultry attribution estimates ranging from 27.1 to 36.7% and economic costs of \$8.1 to \$22.5 billion.

By Robert L. Scharff (**ScienceDirect**)



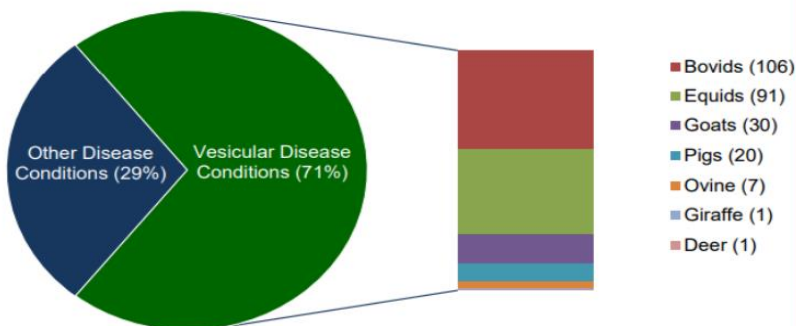
# CALENDAR YEAR 2022 UPDATE: FAD INVESTIGATION REPORT

Figure 1: FAD Investigations from 2002 to 2022



In the past 21 years, there have been over 24,000 investigations conducted for possible foreign animal disease (FAD) or emerging disease incidents throughout the United States, ranging from a yearly low of 290 investigations in calendar year 2008 to a high of 3,230 investigations in calendar year 2022. This summary of FAD investigations was compiled from annual animal health reports in the United States published by Veterinary Services (VS) of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) (available here), data from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) World Animal Health Information Database (available here), and the Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) of APHIS VS. All data in this report from 2014 to present are from EMRS 2.0 (EMRS2), which is the VS system of record for FAD incidents. From 2013 through 2022, 16,727 possible FAD or emerging disease incidents were investigated by VS and State collaborators. In most years, only a small percentage of those were confirmed by the investigation to be an emerging disease or FAD. The exceptions during this period included the following: a widespread vesicular stomatitis outbreak in 2014, the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak in the United States in 2015, an outbreak of virulent

Figure 3: Proportion of FAD Investigations due to Vesicular Conditions, by Species in 2013.



Newcastle disease (vND) that occurred between 2018 and 2020, and an outbreak of rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus-2 (RHDV2). Please note that in and after CY 2015, vesicular stomatitis has not been considered an FAD in the United States. In CY 2022, the current largest HPAI outbreak in the United States started in February affecting 47 States by the end of the calendar year.

# Federal Veterinarians

## Are You Prepared?

Federal Veterinarians are critical in ensuring the nation's food safety and animal/livestock health in accordance with food safety initiatives, administering FSIS, APHIS, DHS, CDC, and FDA guidelines, and various animal health programs. Many federal veterinarians also have the dual role of a manager, supervisor or officer within their respective agency. This leaves you extremely susceptible to allegations, complaints, or potential lawsuits – just for doing your job. Are you emotionally, financially and legally prepared to become the subject of an adverse administrative action, disciplinary proceeding, or civil lawsuit?



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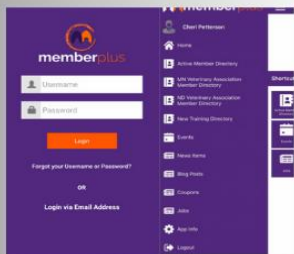


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 Aimee Kephart-Gonzales  
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 Rachael Fisher  
 Michael Holzhauser-Alberti  
 Olivia Coppola  
 Julia Parker  
 Michala Brown  
 Lauren Butler  
 Gustavo Soberano



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## RETIRED MEMBERS >>>

## FINANCIAL SECTION >>>

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