



# WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

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JULY - AUGUST 2025

**100+ YEARS OF SERVICE TO  
FEDERAL VETERINARIANS**

## *Inside this* ISSUE



Get in on the action with our upcoming webinars and programs — because success favors the well-informed!



Be updated with the recap of the recent town hall meeting. Read the important updates on USDA re-organization plan.

Nominate a deserving individual making a difference in our community. Don't miss the chance to recognize excellence for the 2025 Dr. Salmon Award.



Check out the recent NAFV Public practice networking event where networking, ideas, and stories are all equally essential!



**AVMA 2025  
CONVENTION  
MEETING &  
PUBLIC PRACTICE  
NETWORKING EVENT**

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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  
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other similar groups with common interests.

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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 USDA 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 agency senior leadership with your concerns and possible solutions, not as a union but as an organization that represents you as medical/scientific professionals. Our goal is to enhance your work-life balance, productivity, impact to instill a positive sense of accomplishment. Lifting veterinarians positively impacts their teams and, in-turn, agencies. Boosted morale translates into productivity gains and pride in a job well done, making all the difference in our personal and professional lives.

NAFV

# TOWN HALL MEETING

August 8, 2025

On August 1, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) opened a 30-day public comment period on a major departmental reorganization plan. The reorganization seeks to streamline operations, reduce overhead, and relocate approximately 2,600 positions from the Washington, D.C. area to five regional hubs:

- Raleigh, NC
- Kansas City, MO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Fort Collins, CO
- Salt Lake City, UT

USDA's proposed reorganization will move thousands of staff from D.C. to regional hubs, potentially disrupting veterinary services and food safety oversight. Stakeholders are urged to comment by August 26, 2025, highlighting concerns about continuity, staffing, and enforcement capacity in food safety systems.

Stakeholders submitting comments may wish to emphasize the following:

- Safeguard veterinary positions, particularly within FSIS and field operations.
- Request transparency on how many veterinary roles will be affected.
- Ensure inspection and disease surveillance protocols remain intact.
- Call for independent expert input prior to implementation.
- Monitor performance and staffing metrics post-reorganization.

## IMPACTS ON VETERINARIANS & FOOD SAFETY

### 1. DISPLACEMENT AND POTENTIAL TURNOVER

Relocation of staff may cause significant disruption for USDA's veterinary and food inspection workforce.

### 2. FOOD SAFETY RISKS

USDA veterinarians are essential to food safety, ensuring proper inspection at slaughterhouses, monitoring animal health.

### 3. REDUCED COORDINATION & INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Decentralizing USDA operations may fragment communication and decision-making.



**TOWNHALL MEETING  
RECORDING**



**RE-ORGANIZATION OF  
THE USDA (FULL COPY)**



# Global Veterinary Leaders Unite:

## AVMA CONVENTION 2025 AND 40TH WVA CONGRESS LAUNCH IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Bringing together veterinary professionals from around the globe for an international exchange of knowledge and collaboration, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) - AVMA Convention 2025 was held last July 18- 22 in Washington D.C, with the World Veterinary Association (WVA) joining to host their 40th WVA Congress. The WVA Congress is internationally recognized as a premier gathering for global veterinary leadership, scientific exchange and policy development.

"We are honored to welcome the World Veterinary Association and to co-host the 40th WVA Congress," said Dr. Sandra Faeh, president of the AVMA. "This collaboration reflects the increasing need for a united, global approach to veterinary medicine, whether we're addressing emerging zoonotic diseases, improving food safety, or supporting the human-animal bond across cultures." By holding the 40th Congress in conjunction with AVMA Convention 2025, attendees have access to a diverse array of sessions, panels and workshops that reflect both local and international priorities in veterinary medicine.

"We are proud to partner with the AVMA to present the 40th WVA Congress, a milestone event that underscores our shared commitment to advancing veterinary science and public health on a global scale," said Dr. John de Jong, president of the World Veterinary Association. "Bringing together professionals from across continents fosters the exchange of knowledge and innovation that is essential to tackling the complex challenges facing animals, people, and our planet today."

STORY BY: MICHAEL SAN FILIPPO





# PUBLIC PRACTICE NETWORKING EVENT 2025

HOSTED BY THE NAFV



**Our joint reception with DC-VMA, AAFSPHV and NAFV sponsored by IDEXX, Prudential and FEDS Protection which attended by 50+ AVMA attendees, NAFV members and non-members folks.**



**Thank you for all those who joined and shared their knowledge, expertise, and stories making this to a memorable, successful public practice networking event.**





# AVMA FEDERAL ADVOCACY UPDATE

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE



### FEDERAL VETERINARY WORKFORCE

The status of the federal workforce remains fluid. On July 8, the U.S. Supreme Court stayed a trial court preliminary injunction that prevented implementation of the President's Executive Order that would require agencies to develop reorganization plans. The court noted that no agency plan was before it and expressed no view on the legality of any plan that may be reviewed in the future. The AVMA will continue its advocacy work to ensure Congress, and the Administration understand the critical roles federal veterinarians have in protecting animal health, public health, and food safety.



### ANIMAL HEALTH AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

**Farm Bill:** Several provisions that are normally part of the Farm Bill were addressed in the reconciliation legislation enacted on July 4. Regarding veterinary medicine, pertinent provisions included reauthorization through 2030 for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, and the National Animal Vaccine Bank.

With the enactment of the reconciliation legislation on July 4, there is a significant new law that will affect veterinarians, including new small business tax provisions, an overhaul of the student loan provisions in the Higher Education Act, and reauthorization through 2030 of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. The National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program and the National Animal Vaccine Bank. Congress is now working its way through the FY26 appropriations process. Both the House and Senate are advancing their different proposals through the committee process. If lawmakers cannot complete the process or come to an agreement, there will be a need for one or more continuing resolutions, which would extend the funding under the FY25 levels.

Additional work that Congress is anticipated to consider this year includes addressing the remaining aspects of the Farm Bill that were not part of the reconciliation package, National Defense Reauthorization legislation, and another year-end tax bill.

The AVMA maintains its longstanding nonpartisan approach, advocating for the veterinary profession amid a complex and evolving political landscape. Remaining federal legislative priorities—including the Rural Veterinary Workforce Act, the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act, the Healthy Dog Importation Act, and anti-horse soring legislation—have all been reintroduced. In parallel, the AVMA continues to underscore the vital role of federal veterinarians in protecting animal health, public health, and food safety across government agencies.





**New World Screwworm:** In May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) suspended imports of live cattle, bison, and horses from Mexico due to the continued northward spread of New World Screwworm (NWS). The USDA announced it would invest \$21 million to renovate a sterile fly production facility in Metapa, Mexico, to assist eradication efforts, and has committed to the

establishment of a sterile fly dispersal facility in South Texas. Congress also proposed the AVMA-supported Strengthening Tactics to Obstruct the Population of (STOP) Screwworms Act, which aligns with AVMA policy and would authorize \$300 million for the USDA to establish additional sterile fly-rearing facilities and provide for dispersal to areas at risk of NWS infestation. Additionally, language was included in the FY26 House Appropriations bill that reaffirms the Secretary of Agriculture's authority to use emergency funds under the Animal Health Protection Act to establish a sterile fly rearing facility in the U.S.

On June 18, Secretary of Agriculture Brook Rollins announced a five-pronged plan to enhance USDA's ability to detect, control, and eliminate NWS. After a newly reported case of NWS in Mexico, Secretary Rollins ordered the closure of livestock trade through southern ports of entry, effective July 9 to protect American livestock and the nation's food supply.



## HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT DEBT

**Rural Veterinary Workforce Act:** This AVMA-endorsed legislation aims to strengthen veterinary care in rural and underserved areas by addressing educational debt. If enacted, the bill would eliminate federal taxes on awards from the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), a proven program that offers up to \$120,000 in student loan relief to veterinarians who commit to three years of service in one of the 243 USDA-designated veterinary shortage areas.



## PHARMACEUTICAL ISSUES

**Xylazine:** On February 12, the AVMA helped secure the reintroduction of the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act in both the House and Senate. Endorsed by the AVMA, the bipartisan legislation would equip the U.S. Drug Enforcement

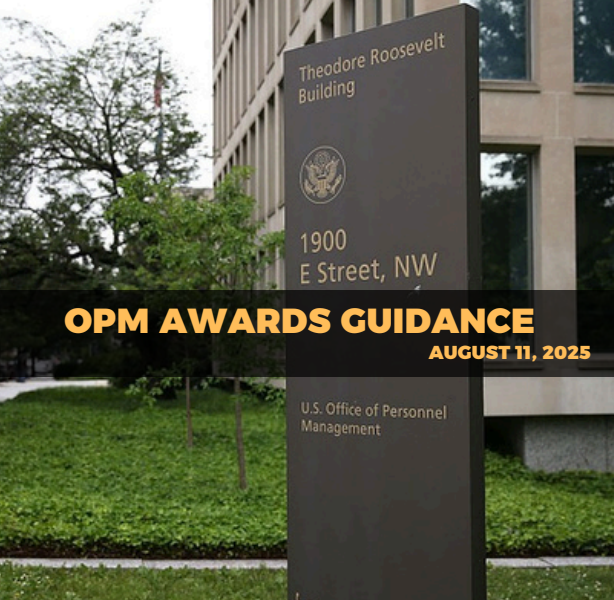
Administration (DEA) with tools to combat illicit xylazine use by classifying it as a Schedule III drug, while working to preserve legal veterinary access and use. The bill also enables the DEA to monitor the legitimate supply chain, helping ensure continued availability for veterinarians. Supported by both the DEA and FDA, this targeted approach avoids the unintended consequences of administrative scheduling, which could otherwise disrupt veterinary care. The AVMA is actively working with House and Senate champions to secure inclusion of the bill in a suitable legislative package.



## TAX PROVISIONS

The budget reconciliation legislation addressed a series of tax provisions that were set to expire, as well as establishing new tax programs. Below are some of the provisions that will impact the veterinary profession:

**Pass-through business deduction:** This provision allows a deduction of up to 20% of qualified business income for owners of some businesses, which will include many veterinary practices.



## OPM AWARDS GUIDANCE

AUGUST 11, 2025

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

This document summarizes the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memorandum dated August 11, 2025, which provides updated guidance on federal employee awards. The memo supersedes all previous awards guidance and sets clear expectations for differentiating performance, prioritizing exceptional contributions, and structuring awards programs to incentivize excellence.

### Key Highlights:

- Supersedes prior OPM and OMB awards guidance.
- Agencies must ensure awards—both monetary and non-monetary—are aligned with truly exceptional performance.
- Overly broad or inflated performance ratings should be avoided to preserve the value and fairness of awards.
- Top performers (above 'Fully Successful') should receive the most significant awards and adjustments.
- Title 5 of the U.S. Code provides the legal authority for agencies to design awards and bonuses.
- Awards should be used strategically to motivate and recognize high performance.



### Specific Award Types

- Group incentive programs – Cash, time-off, informal recognition with clear goals, periods, and payout formulas (gainsharing, goalsharing).
- Agency-level ('Secretary's/Director's') awards for notable achievements by individuals or teams.
- Special Act awards – Real-time recognition for special acts/services or ideas that improve efficiency; includes encouraging fraud/waste/abuse reporting.
- Presidential Rank Awards (SES/SP) – Distinguished (35%) and Meritorious (20%); paused FY2025, returning FY2026.
- Performance-based awards – Cash tied to rating; at least 60% of bonus pools to Level 4–5 performers.
- Performance-based pay adjustments – For SES/SP with PRB involvement; 12-month rule for SES.
- Time-off awards – Available to all employees; political appointees eligible for time-off but not cash.
- Quality Step Increases (GS) – For sustained Level-5 performance; not within 52 weeks of a prior QSI.

### Implementation Strategies

- Announce agency-wide award programs with clear categories and non-monetary options.
- Budget early and reserve funds for real-time/mid-year awards; use time-off/QSIs where cash is tight.
- Tighten ratings and distribution: Cap Level 4–5 to ≤30% (SES/SP) agency-wide for FY2025; mandatory cap from FY2026 absent presidential waiver.
- Apply guardrails: Aggregate pay limits apply; SES/SP Level-3 awards ≤5%; non-SES/SP Level-3 ≤1%; awards >\$10,000 require OPM approval.

### Alignment with Recent Reforms & Deadlines

- Mirrors the 2025 OPM push for normalized ratings and greater differentiation.
- Fewer Level 4–5 ratings with larger bonuses concentrated among top performers.
- Agency compliance plan due September 8, 2025.
- FY2025 awards/ratings report due February 27, 2026.
- Political appointee cash-award freeze continues.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The August 11, 2025 OPM Awards Guidance provides a clear framework for recognizing and rewarding exceptional performance in the federal workforce. Its emphasis on differentiation, targeted awards, and strict compliance deadlines is intended to create a more performance-driven culture. However, to further strengthen workforce motivation and retention—particularly in technical and specialized roles—agencies should integrate recognition of advanced degrees and board certification into their awards programs. By explicitly valuing such professional achievements, agencies can:

- Incentivize continued professional development and credentialing.
- Attract and retain highly skilled professionals in critical areas.
- Reinforce the importance of expertise in fulfilling the agency's mission.

### Recommendation:

Agencies should add criteria within award programs to provide additional recognition—monetary or non-monetary—for employees who obtain advanced academic qualifications or professional certifications relevant to their role. This aligns with the broader OPM goal of driving excellence and supports long-term talent development.



# CURRENT STATUS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA H5N1 IN THE UNITED STATES - AUGUST 2025

## Overview & Outbreak Trends

H5N1 bird flu has caused an unprecedented multistate outbreak since spring 2024, affecting poultry, dairy cows, and various wildlife species. The virus is identified as clade 2.3.4.4 b, which is particularly adept at infecting multiple mammalian species. Animal surveillance indicates a steep decline in detections since early 2025, with single-digit cases among cattle and poultry in the past 30 days.

## Risk Assessment

The public health risk to the general population remains low. The virus has infected diverse mammalian hosts, raising concerns about potential mutation. Experts urge vaccination of livestock and high-risk workers.

## Human Infections

From the outbreak's onset through mid-April 2025, the U.S. recorded 70 confirmed and probable human cases, mostly among agricultural workers exposed to infected dairy herds (41 cases) or poultry (24 cases), with 3 cases of unknown exposure. The first and only fatality occurred in Louisiana on January 6, 2025. A single case in Missouri had no identifiable animal exposure. Human-to-human transmission remains unconfirmed.

## Surveillance & Response Measures

As of July 2, 2025, the CDC officially transitioned from emergency response mode to routine influenza surveillance. Surveillance systems show minimal signs of H5N1 in humans, and no new confirmed cases have been reported since February 2025. USDA is still tracking animal infections and supporting biosecurity, field vaccine trials, and One Health coordination.

## Bottom-Line Summary

- No new human cases since February 2025, and overall animal outbreaks have been declining.
- CDC's emergency activation ended in July 2025, with surveillance now part of routine influenza tracking.
- Risk to the broader public is currently low, though vigilance remains essential.
- Monitoring continues, especially among farm workers and other high-risk individuals.

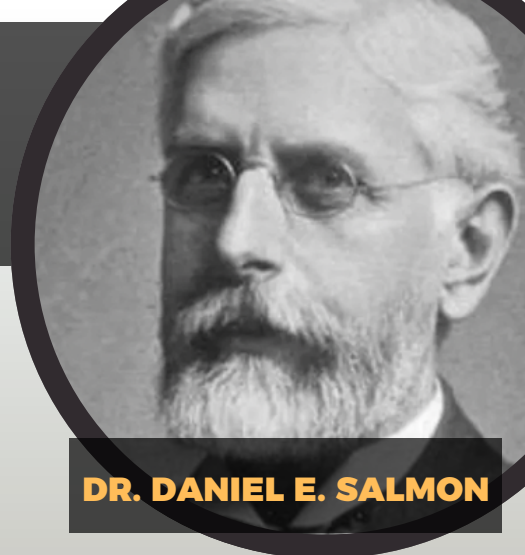
[Credit to the full source here:](#)

# DR. DANIEL E. SALMON AWARD 2025

## NOMINATION IS NOW OPEN!

### FOR EXEMPLARY ACHIEVEMENT IN FEDERAL VETERINARY MEDICINE

The Dr. Daniel E. Salmon Award is presented annually by the NAFV to recognize outstanding contributions and notable service in the public's interest by a veterinarian federally employed in any human health, environmental health, or animal health discipline. This award was established to honor the first director of the United States Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry in its centennial year — 1984. Dr. Daniel E. Salmon was a world-renowned veterinary medical scientist who pioneered research in bacterial diseases of animals and immunology. His efforts led to the development of killed vaccines, and to the naming of the bacterial genus *Salmonella* in his honor. His work contributed immeasurably to improving the public's health and to disease control efforts in general. It is hoped that this award will encourage veterinarians to continue excellence in their performance and to aspire for public service as a lifelong career.



**DR. DANIEL E. SALMON**

One award may be given yearly to worthy nominees. The award consists of a plaque and an honorarium of \$500.00. This award is supported by the National Association of Federal Veterinarians. This award will be presented at the annual Department of Agriculture Honor Awards, usually in October.

#### Eligibility Criteria

The nominee must be a veterinarian who is a career employee of the federal government with at least five (5) years of service as of December 31st of the current year. No more than one (1) nomination per 400 (or portion thereof) veterinarians employed may be submitted by an agency within any federal department.

#### Performance Criteria

The nominee must have demonstrated sustained significant contributions over a period of five (5) years or more in federal programs involving public health, consumer protection, or animal health and welfare while serving in any preventive medicine, regulatory, research, or environmental health position.

The deadline of submission for the nomination will be on September 30, 2025.

#### DR. SALMON AWARD RECIPIENTS



**DR. AMY LEBLANC**  
2024



**DR. MARK SIMPSON**  
2023

**NOMINATION FORM**





# Career Strategy:

## New Federal Resumes + NAFV Career Support Offerings

Join us for a lunch time “power session” about career advancement and services available as an NAFV member. Dr. Melanie Barham, DVM, MBA, PMP, Certified Coach will be providing information on the new 2 page federal resume format and how to ready your application for career advancement, as well as career coaching/strategy and resume/interview support available to NAFV members at exclusive rates.



**Dr. Melanie Barham**

DVM, MBA, PMP  
**Guest Speaker**



**September 4, 2025  
Thursday**



**1:00 PM ET**



**Online  
Teams Meeting**

**REGISTER NOW**



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## NAFV NEW MEMBERS:

Melody Maxwell

Brian Farr

Lauren McNair

Cara Reiter

Tiffany Kimbrell

Truett Bankston

Gregory Salyards

We encourage our members in becoming an AVMA member. AVMA membership supports you with benefits that enhance your opportunities for success in both your professional and personal life. Be sure to take advantage of the full array of benefits to get the most out of your AVMA membership.

LEARN MORE →

To make sure you're getting the most out of your membership, make sure that you have access to our member-only-portal on our site. You'll be able to access the information listed. Our website has tons of information for you on:



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