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## Rural Missouri Comes Through Again for Agriculture's Future

Rural Missouri remains on the cutting edge when it comes to merging the old ways of doing things with the new. Because of some forward thinking a few years ago, these efforts are about to go a step further.

The [Missouri Department of Agriculture](#) (MDA) is in line to get a \$500,000 grant from the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA). The funding will be used to help the state train more large animal veterinarians. There is a shortage of these specialists not only in rural Missouri, but throughout the country.

A pilot program would feature recruitment, specialization and further training for animal health professionals who have already been through veterinary technical programs or veterinary school. The plan is to use the [Kansas City Animal Health Corridor](#) as the training grounds, in the hopes of ending the nationwide shortage.

A couple of major players in the veterinary business are right here in rural Missouri. [Addison](#)

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[Labs](#) and [Inovatia](#) have operations in Fayette. We are very fortunate to have great folks in our area who are dedicated to keeping the family farm thriving and who understand the need for agriculture.

In addition to the joint effort between the USDA and the MDA, Missouri lawmakers passed beneficial legislation to get more large animal veterinarians back to work in our state in 2007. [Senate Bill 320](#) created the [Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program](#) and also made some changes to the [Large Animal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program](#). Since then, we have started to see more young people become interested in the profession, but a nationwide shortage remains.

At a time where money is tight, it is good to see there are some folks who still understand the value of good, old-fashioned work. With this new pilot program, we will be able to help solve a crisis in the farming community. And the help will come from folks right here in the heart of America. This is a crucial undertaking, and I applaud the efforts being made by everybody involved to make it a success.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.*

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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