

Facts & Figures

Employment of male and female graduates of US veterinary medical colleges, 1998

- ▶ Male graduates of veterinary medical colleges received a mean of 2.9 employment offers, compared with 2.5 employment offers received by female graduates.
- ▶ More female graduates (153/719; 21.3%) entered advanced study programs than did male graduates (73/427; 17.1%).

On the basis of the 1998 AVMA survey of 1,520 graduates of US veterinary medical colleges, it was estimated that 76.2% of graduates accepted positions in private practice at a mean annual salary of \$36,724, an increase of 6.5% from 1997.¹ This report describes employment choices of 1998 male and female veterinary medical college graduates.

Employment Offers

At the time of the survey (spring, 1998), 1,271 (83.6%) of 1,520 respondents had received at least 1 employment offer, including 82% of female graduates and 86% of male graduates (Table 1). Overall, mean number of offers per respondent was 2.6; female graduates received a mean of 2.5 offers, whereas mean offers for male graduates was slightly greater at 2.9.

Type of Employment

Graduates were asked to indicate first, second, and third employment preferences: 1,404 (92.4%) indicated a first preference, 895 (58.9%) indicated a second preference, and 627 (41.2%) indicated a third preference. The top 3 employment choices for male and female graduates in 1998 were, in order of preference, small animal exclusive, small animal predominant, and mixed animal practices.

Among all respondents, 75.5% indicated the type of position they had accepted. Of these, most graduates (76.2%) had accepted positions in private practice (Table 2). Of 719 females who had accepted positions, 538 (74.8%) entered private practice, compared with 336 of 427 (78.7%) male graduates. One hundred forty-eight (9.9%) respondents, 69 males and 79 females, indicated that they currently were not seeking employment in veterinary medicine. Twenty-one percent (153/719) of females entered advanced study programs, compared with 17.1% (73/427) of males. Twenty-eight (3.9%) females entered public/corporate practice, compared with 18 (4.2%) males.

Among those who entered private practice, female graduates were more likely than male graduates to enter small animal practice (predominant and exclusive). Four hundred twenty-seven of 719 (59.4%) females entered small animal practice, compared with 175 of 427 (41%) males. Conversely, 15.7% of male graduates entered large animal practice (predominant and exclusive), compared with 3.5% of female graduates.

Starting Salaries

Starting salaries were reported by 411 male graduates and 685 female graduates. Female graduates

Table 1—Employment offers made to female and male veterinary medical college graduates, 1998

No. of offers	Female	Male
	No. (%)	No. (%)
1	267 (37.1)	139 (34.1)
2	165 (22.9)	74 (18.1)
3	137 (19.0)	84 (20.6)
≥ 4	151 (21.0)	111 (27.2)
Total	720 (100.0)	408 (100.0)

Table 2—Employment of female and male veterinary medical college graduates, 1998

Employment	Female	Male
	No. (%)	No. (%)
Large animal exclusive	6 (0.8)	18 (4.2)
Large animal predominant	19 (2.6)	49 (11.5)
Mixed animal	66 (9.2)	73 (17.1)
Small animal predominant	100 (13.9)	46 (10.8)
Small animal exclusive	327 (45.5)	129 (30.2)
Equine	20 (2.8)	21 (4.9)
University (research, teaching)	5 (0.7)	2 (0.5)
Federal government	4 (0.6)	1 (0.2)
Military service	6 (0.8)	9 (2.1)
State/local government	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Industry/commercial business	0 (0.0)	3 (0.7)
Advanced study	153 (21.3)	73 (17.1)
Not-for-profit	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)
Other employment	12 (1.7)	3 (0.7)
Employment total	719 (100.0)	427 (100.0)

(including graduates continuing in advanced study) reported a mean starting salary of \$32,679, \$1,668 less than mean starting salary of \$34,347 for male graduates (Fig 1). Mean female graduate starting salary in private practice was \$36,450, an increase of 7.6% from 1997. Mean male graduate starting salary in private practice was \$37,158, an increase of 5% from 1997.

Additional Compensation and Fringe Benefits

In addition to base salary, 323 female graduates and 228 male graduates anticipated additional cash compensation of \$3,861 and \$5,254, respectively, representing a difference of \$1,393. Two hundred twenty-seven of 538 (42.2%) females and 173 of 336 (51.5%) males entering private practice reported additional cash compensation. Male graduates entering private practice expected to receive \$5,340 and females expected \$3,945 of additional cash compensation.

All graduates were asked to indicate which of 15 fringe benefits would be provided by their new employers; 76% of graduates responded to this question. Compensation packages of at least one-half of all grad-

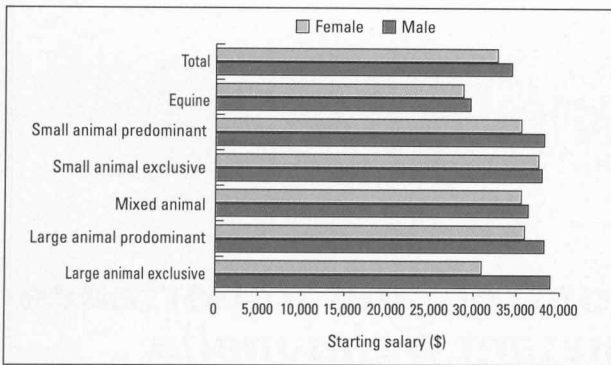


Figure 1—Annual starting salary of male and female veterinary college graduates entering private practice, 1998.

Table 3—Fringe benefits provided by employers for female and male veterinary medical college graduates, 1998

Benefit	Female	Male
	No. (%)	No. (%)
Life insurance	196 (27.1)	118 (27.4)
Medical/hospital plan	465 (64.2)	287 (66.7)
Dental plan	122 (16.9)	76 (17.7)
Cafeteria plan	20 (2.8)	18 (4.2)
Pension plan	127 (17.5)	86 (20.0)
Profit-sharing	88 (12.2)	52 (12.1)
Disability insurance	232 (32.0)	144 (33.5)
Liability insurance	501 (69.2)	288 (67.0)
Association dues	425 (58.7)	236 (54.9)
Continuing education expenses	534 (73.8)	313 (72.8)
Continuing education leave	438 (60.5)	260 (60.5)
Paid legal holidays	273 (37.7)	156 (36.3)
Sick leave	334 (46.1)	217 (50.5)
Annual vacation leave	542 (74.9)	315 (73.3)
Other	78 (10.8)	42 (9.8)

uates who accepted positions included medical or hospitalization plans, liability insurance, association dues, continuing education expenses, continuing education leave, and annual vacation leave (Table 3). Less than one-fifth of compensation packages included dental plans, cafeteria plans, pension plans, and profit-sharing.

Overall, the benefits received by male and female graduates were similar. The 4 most common benefits were annual vacation leave, continuing education expenses, liability insurance, and medical/hospital plan. The number of males and females receiving these benefits was comparable: 75% of women and 73.3% of men received annual vacation leave; 73.8% of women and 72.8% of men received continuing education expenses; 69.2% of women and 67% of men received liability insurance; and 64.2% of women and 66.7% of men received a medical/hospital plan.

Over the past 3 years the 15 most common benefits for both male and female graduates have remained the same, although the availability of these benefits has changed. The percentage of employers in 1998 offering annual vacation leave, continuing education expenses, profit-sharing, medical/hospital plan, and life insurance was slightly smaller than in 1997. There have been no substantial changes in availability of sick leave, paid legal holidays, and continuing education leave. The number of employers offering association dues, liability insurance, disability insurance, pension plan, cafeteria plan, and dental plan has increased steadily since 1996. The benefit that has increased

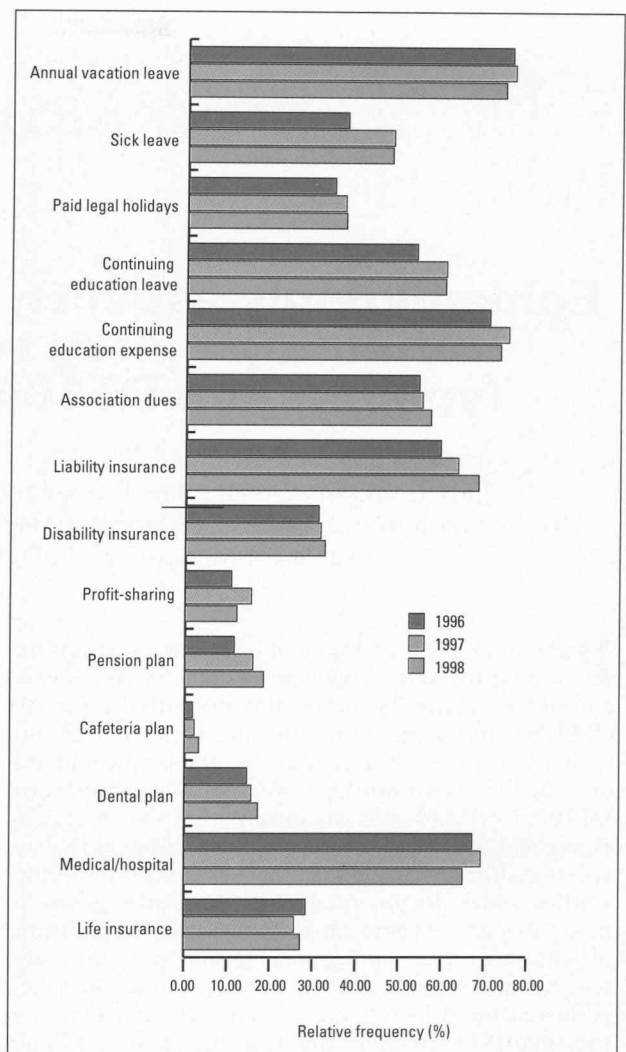


Figure 2—Comparison of benefits offered by employers to 1996, 1997, and 1998 graduates of US veterinary medical colleges.

Table 4—Personal characteristics of female and male veterinary medical college graduates, 1998

Characteristic	Female	Male
Mean age (y)	28	28
Marital status		
Single (%)	59.8	51.7
Married (%)	34.5	42.5
Divorced (%)	5.6	5.7
Widow/Widower (%)	0.1	0
Graduates with children (%)	10.4	22.7

most in availability is the cafeteria plan. In 1996, 1.8% of employers offered this benefit, whereas in 1998, it was offered by almost twice as many (3.3%) employers (Fig 2). Responding graduates also provided information on personal characteristics such as age, marital status, and number of children (Table 4).

Reference

1. Gehrke, BC. Employment, starting salaries, and educational indebtedness of 1997 graduates of US veterinary medical colleges. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1997;211:1519-1520.

From the AVMA Centers for Information Management; J. Karl Wise, PhD, Director; Claire-Louise Adams, MSc, Research Analyst.