

Facts & Figures

Employment of male and female graduates of US veterinary medical colleges, 2003

- ▶ Among graduates who received employment offers, 92.0% of males and 86.5% of females accepted an offer.
- ▶ Mean starting salary among 2003 graduates of US veterinary medical colleges was \$40,490 for females and \$44,145 for males.

Employment, starting salaries, benefits, and educational indebtedness of male and female graduates were determined from the 2003 AVMA survey of graduating veterinary medical students. Responses were received from 1,860 of 2,307 graduates. The survey response rate was 81.0%; 71.1% of the respondents were female and 28.9% were male. Not all respondents answered all questions.

Employment Preferences, Offers, and Acceptances

At the time of the survey, all but 2.1% of graduating veterinarians were seeking employment in veterinary medicine. Graduates were asked to indicate the top 3 employment types they were seeking. Employment in the private sector was the first choice of 72.3% of the graduates. A position in an advanced study program was sought by 25.0%, whereas 2.3% were seeking employment in the public or corporate sectors.

Overall, 90.3% of the graduates who were seeking employment received at least 1 offer of employment. The mean number of offers among those who received offers was 2.5. Offers were accepted by 88.2% of graduates who received them. Only 4.1% accepted employment in an employment type that was not among their top 3 choices.

A higher percentage of male graduates (94.8%) received at least 1 offer of employment, compared with female graduates (88.5%). Male graduates also received more offers than female graduates. Among those who received offers, the mean number of offers per graduate was 3.0 for males and 2.3 for females. Among male graduates with employment offers, 67.5% had more than 1 offer and 29.7% had 4 offers or more (Table 1). Among female graduates with employment offers, 58.1% had more than 1 offer and 15.9% had 4 offers or more.

Among graduates who received offers, 92.0% of males and 86.5% of females accepted an offer of employment. Among those graduates, 1.6% of males indicated they would be self-employed, compared with 1.1% of females. Almost all graduates (97.4%) who accepted employment expected to work full-time. A

From the AVMA Membership and Field Services Division, J. Karl Wise, PhD, CAE, Director, and Allison J. Shepherd, MBA, Research Projects Manager.

similar percentage of male and female graduates expected to work full-time (98.2% vs 97.1%, respectively).

The distribution of graduates by type of employment accepted was determined (Table 2). Among female graduates, 42.9% accepted an offer from a small animal exclusive practice, 27.7% accepted a position in an advanced study program, and 9.2% accepted an offer from a small animal predominant practice. The distribution of male graduates was broader; 32.1% found employment in a small animal exclusive practice, 23.0% were accepted into an advanced study program, and 14.3% accepted an offer from a mixed animal practice. Among all graduates who accepted an offer, 6.0% of females and 4.9% of males found employment in an equine practice.

Base Starting Salary and Additional Compensation

Graduates who accepted an offer of employment were asked to indicate the base starting salary they expected to receive. Mean starting salary in 2003 was \$40,490 for females and \$44,145 for males. Mean

Table 1—Employment offers received by female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2003

No. of offers	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
1	406 (41.9)	141 (32.5)
2	242 (25.0)	87 (20.1)
3	167 (17.2)	77 (17.7)
≥ 4	154 (15.9)	129 (29.7)
Total	969 (100)	434 (100)

Table 2—Employment of female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2003

Employment type	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
Large animal exclusive	13 (1.4)	30 (6.7)
Large animal predominant	21 (2.2)	26 (5.8)
Mixed animal	69 (7.2)	64 (14.3)
Small animal exclusive	411 (42.9)	144 (32.1)
Small animal predominant	88 (9.2)	40 (8.9)
Equine	57 (6.0)	22 (4.9)
University	1 (0.1)	2 (0.5)
Uniformed services	10 (1.0)	8 (1.8)
State or local government	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Federal government	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Industry or commercial	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)
Not-for-profit	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
Advanced study	265 (27.7)	103 (23.0)
Unknown	8 (0.8)	3 (0.7)
Other	10 (1.0)	5 (1.4)
Total	958 (100)	448 (100)

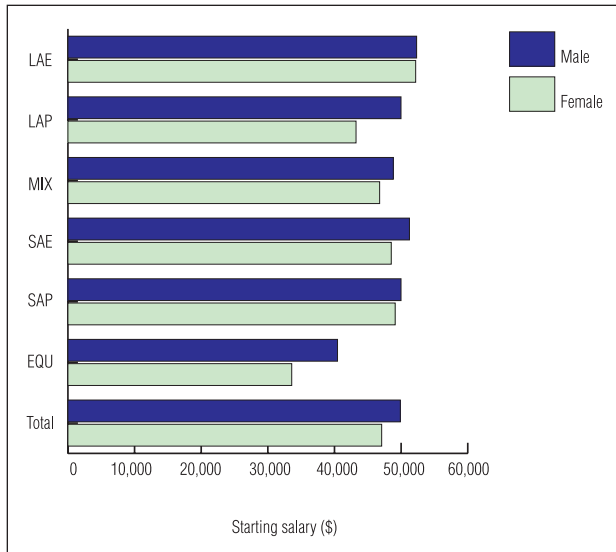


Figure 1—Annual starting salary of male and female veterinary medical college graduates who entered private practice, 2003. LAE = Large animal exclusive. LAP = Large animal predominant. MIX = Mixed animal. SAE = Small animal exclusive. SAP = Small animal predominant. EQU = Equine.

salary for graduates who accepted an offer in private practice was \$47,081 for females and \$49,880 for males. Among female graduates, salaries ranged from \$33,583 for equine practice to \$52,183 for large animal exclusive practice (Fig 1). Among male graduates, salaries ranged from \$40,455 for equine practice to \$52,325 for large animal exclusive practice.

Among graduates who accepted an offer of employment, 51.3% of female graduates and 63.2% of male graduates indicated they would be eligible to earn compensation in addition to their base salary. Eligible female graduates expected to earn a mean additional amount of \$6,719. Eligible male graduates expected to earn a mean additional amount of \$8,695. In the pri-

Table 3—Fringe benefits received by female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2003

Benefit	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
Life insurance	235 (24.5)	135 (30.1)
Medical/hospital insurance	656 (68.5)	299 (67.0)
Dental plan	228 (23.8)	96 (21.4)
Cafeteria plan	28 (2.9)	18 (4.0)
Pension plan	192 (20.0)	119 (26.6)
Profit-sharing	103 (10.8)	67 (15.0)
Disability insurance	261 (27.2)	171 (38.2)
Liability insurance	650 (67.9)	300 (67.0)
Association dues	580 (60.5)	271 (60.5)
Continuing education expenses	723 (75.5)	343 (76.6)
Continuing education leave	557 (58.1)	279 (62.3)
Paid legal holidays	365 (38.1)	182 (40.6)
Sick leave	440 (45.9)	241 (53.8)
Annual vacation leave	664 (69.3)	329 (73.4)
Other	135 (14.1)	62 (13.8)

Table 4—Personal characteristics of female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2003

Characteristic	Female	Male	All
Mean age (y)	28.1	28.0	28.1
Marital status			
Single (%)	60.4	53.3	58.3
Married (%)	35.2	43.7	37.7
Divorced (%)	4.2	3.0	3.9
Widow or widower (%)	0.2	0.0	0.1
Graduates with children (%)	6.9	17.6	10.0

ivate sector, the mean additional amount was \$6,742 for females and \$8,441 for males.

Fringe Benefits

Graduates who accepted employment were asked to indicate the fringe benefits they received as part of their compensation package. All but 5.4% received at least 1 of the 15 benefits (Fig 2). In 2003, medical or hospital insurance was provided to 67.9% of graduates and liability insurance was provided to 67.4% of graduates. Annual vacation leave was received by 70.6% of graduates, 38.8% received paid legal holidays, and 48.4% were provided sick leave benefits. However, just 26.3% received all 3 of these benefits. A continuing education expense benefit was received by 75.5% of graduates; 59.2% received continuing education leave, and 56.5% received both continuing education expense and leave benefits. Life insurance was provided to 26.3% of graduates, and 22.0% received a pension benefit.

The percentages of male and female graduates who received each of the benefits were comparable for most benefits (Table 3). The largest difference between male and female graduates was for disability insurance; 38.2% of male graduates received this benefit, compared with 27.2% of female graduates. The most commonly received benefit was continuing education expenses; 75.5% of females and 76.6% of males received this benefit. Annual vacation leave was provided to 69.3% of female graduates and 73.4% of male graduates.

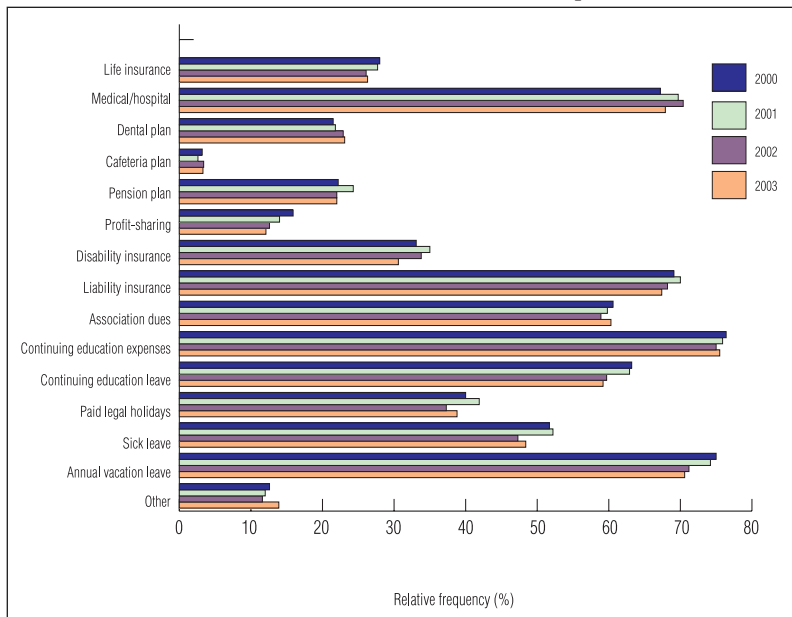


Figure 2—Comparison of benefits offered by employers to graduates of US veterinary colleges from 2000 to 2003.

Liability insurance was provided to 67.9% of female graduates and 67.0% of male graduates.

Educational Indebtedness

Most veterinary students had accumulated some debt by the time they graduated. Among 2003 graduates, only 15.7% of females and 11.9% of males did not incur any educational debt. Mean debt among those with debt was \$72,271 for males and \$78,293 for females. Among male graduates, 67.4% had debt of \$50,000 or more. Among female graduates, 70.3% had debt of \$50,000 or more.

Graduate Characteristics

Male and female veterinary students were approximately the same age at graduation (Table 4). Mean age of 2003 graduates was 28.0 years for males and 28.1 years for females. A majority of graduates were single and never married; 60.4% of females and 53.3% of males were in this category. A higher percentage of males were married (43.7%), compared with females (35.2%). One characteristic that distinguished graduates by gender was the percentage with at least 1 child; 17.6% of males were in this category, compared with just 6.9% of females.