

# Facts & Figures

## Size and organization of private veterinary practices, 2003

- ▶ More than half of veterinary practices, for most practice types, are managed by 1 or 2 veterinarians.
- ▶ Corporation is the most common form of business organization for nearly all practice types.

On the basis of economic survey data obtained from veterinary practice owners who responded to the 2004 Expanded AVMA Biennial Economic Survey, statistical analysis was conducted to indicate the distribution of veterinary practices by number of veterinarians in practice. Four practice-size classes were defined, according to the number of full-time-equivalent veterinarians (1, 2, 3, or  $\geq 4$ ) working in each practice.

The 1-veterinarian class included the largest percentage of practices for most types of private practice (large animal exclusive, 34.2%; large animal predominant, 30.4%; small animal exclusive, 32.4%; small animal predominant, 30.3%; equine, 42.9%; and other

[miscellaneous], 50.0%). For mixed animal practices, 31.4% were in the 1-veterinarian class and slightly more (32.2%) were in the  $\geq 4$ -veterinarian class (Table 1).

Analysis also focused on the practices' type of business organization, including sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and limited liability (Table 2). Corporation was the most common type of organization for most practice types, with the distribution ranging from 30.0% for other (miscellaneous) practices to 45.7% for large animal predominant practices. Sole proprietorship was most common among small animal predominant practices (38.9%) and other (miscellaneous) practices (60.0%). Partnerships were reported for 4.8% of equine practices to 21.7% of large animal predominant practices. Limited liability corporations were reported for 6.0% of mixed animal practices to 28.6% of equine practices.

Veterinarians managed various types of practices, as indicated by the range of facility types (ie, full-service animal hospital, outpatient clinic, mobile ambulatory unit, emergency clinics, specialty-referral practices, and other [miscellaneous] practices). Small animal exclusive (89.5%), small animal predominant (86.2%), mixed animal (78.0%), and other (miscellaneous) practices (70.0%) were most likely to have

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Table 1—Percentage distribution of various veterinary practice types by number of veterinarians employed.

No. of veterinarians*	LAE	LAP	MIX	SAE	SAP	EQU	OTH
1 (1 to 1.5)	34.2	30.4	31.4	32.4	30.3	42.9	50.0
2 (1.6 to 2.5)	23.7	15.2	24.6	23.9	28.4	14.3	40.0
3 (2.5 to 3.5)	18.4	26.1	11.9	18.5	22.9	4.8	0.0
3.6 to $\geq 4.0$	23.7	28.3	32.2	25.2	18.3	38.1	10.0
No. of usable responses	38	46	118	222	109	21	10

\*Numbers in parentheses represent the range of full-time equivalents.  
 LAE = Large animal exclusive. LAP = Large animal predominant. MIX = Mixed animal. SAE = Small animal exclusive. SAP = Small animal predominant. EQU = Equine. OTH = Other (miscellaneous).  
 Columns may not total 100% because percentages have been rounded.

Table 2—Percentage distribution of various veterinary practice types by type of organization.

Type of organization	LAE	LAP	MIX	SAE	SAP	EQU	OTH
Sole proprietorship	31.6	26.1	35.9	33.3	38.9	33.3	60.0
Partnership	21.1	21.7	17.1	12.3	12.0	4.8	0.0
Professional service corporation	34.2	45.7	41.0	42.0	38.0	33.3	30.0
Limited liability	13.2	6.5	6.0	12.3	11.1	28.6	10.0
No. of usable responses	38	46	117	219	108	21	10

See Table 1 for key.

Table 3—Percentage distribution of various veterinary practice types by type of facility.

Type of facility	LAE	LAP	MIX	SAE	SAP	EQU	OTH
Full-service animal hospital	0.0	47.8	78.0	89.5	86.2	0.0	70.0
Outpatient clinic	7.9	23.9	16.1	5.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
Mobile ambulatory unit	81.6	28.3	2.5	2.3	4.6	66.7	30.0
Emergency clinic	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Specialty/referral practice	5.3	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.9	28.6	0.0
Other	5.3	0.0	3.4	0.5	0.0	4.8	0.0
No. of usable responses	38	46	118	220	109	21	10

See Table 1 for key.

full-service animal hospitals. Nearly half (47.8%) of large animal predominant practices had a full-service hospital, whereas large animal exclusive and equine practices did not indicate full-service hospitals (Table 3). Outpatient clinics ranged from 0% for equine practices and other (miscellaneous) practices to 23.9% for large animal predominant practices. Mobile ambulatory units were used by 81.6% of large animal exclusive practices and 66.7% of equine practices.

With the exception of 0.9% of small animal exclusive practices, emergency clinics were not reported for any practice types. Specialty-referral practices ranged from 0.0% for large animal predominant, mixed animal, and other (miscellaneous) practices to 28.6% for equine practices.

**Reference**

1. AVMA. *Economic report on veterinarians & veterinary practices*, 2005. Schaumburg, Ill: AVMA, 2005.



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AD-316