

VETERINARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES



Ministry of Northern Development

VETERINARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

A. PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Veterinary Assistance Program helps promote the viability of the livestock industry by supporting the provision of veterinary services to livestock producers. It does this by using conditional grants to offset the travel, locum and continuing education costs incurred by Participating Veterinary Practices. The Program is delivered in collaboration with participating producer and veterinarian representatives. Stakeholder organisations include the Northern Producer Animal Health Network and the Designated Area Veterinarians Association.

B. PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these Guidelines, the following terms have the meanings indicated:

"Act" means the Ontario *Veterinarians Act* R.S.O. 1990, c. V.3 (as amended) and its regulations.

"Call" means a single visit by a Participating Veterinary Practice to provide Veterinary Services.

"Conditional Contribution" means a contribution made on a reimbursement basis in the amounts set out in Part G below, that does not need to be repaid by the Participating Veterinary Practice provided that the terms and conditions of the VSA are satisfied;

"CVO" means the College of Veterinarians of Ontario.

"DAVA" means the Designated Area Veterinarians Association.

"Guidelines" means these 2012-2013 Program Guidelines.

"Isolated Producer" means a Participating Producer whose place of business is located at least 70 kilometre (one way) driving distance from a Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business.

"Isolated Veterinary Practice" means a Participating Veterinary Practice that has been so designated by the Ministry in accordance with these Guidelines.

"Licensed Practitioner" means a veterinarian licensed by the CVO pursuant to the Act.

"Livestock" means horses, cattle, sheep, goats, swine, rabbits, poultry, bison, deer, or animals maintained in captivity for producing fur, velvet, or meat that are owned or in the care of a Participating Producer.

"Ministry" means the Ministry of Northern Development.

"NPAHN" means the Northern Producer Animal Health Network.

"OVMA" means the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association.

"Participating Producer" means an owner or caretaker of Livestock, which has a place of business located in the Program Area, has a client relationship with a Participating Veterinary Practice and is a member of a Veterinary Services Committee (membership as defined by the applicable VSC).

"Participating Veterinary Practice" means a veterinary practice that:

- (a) has its practice name registered with the CVO;
- (b) whose Director is licensed under the Act;
- (c) maintains an accredited Food-Producing Animal mobile (defined in CVO by-laws) throughout the Program Period; and
- (d) has entered into a Veterinary Services Agreement; or
- (e) where with the approval of the Ministry, a Veterinarian licensed under the Act that has an accredited Food-Producing Animal mobile that works as an independent contractor may also be considered eligible for a Veterinary Services Agreement.

"Place of Business" means the base unit component of Food-Producing Animal mobile as defined by CVO. The address of this base unit is stated on the current Certificate of Accreditation Food-Producing Animal mobile.

"Program" means the Veterinary Assistance Program.

"Program Area" means all areas in the Province of Ontario north of and including the County of Renfrew, the County of Haliburton, the Township of Addington Highlands, the Township of Carlow/Mayo, the Township of Limerick, the Township of Wollaston, the Township of Georgian Bluffs, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, and the District Municipality of Muskoka.

"Program Period" means the current Veterinarian Assistance Program period, which is from April 1 to March 31.

"Substitute Veterinary Services" are services provided by a Participating Veterinary Practice on behalf of another Participating Veterinary Practice that is temporarily unable to provide the Veterinary Services required under its VSA with the Ministry.

"VSA" means the Veterinary Services Agreement between the Ministry and a Veterinary Practice to provide Veterinary Services.

"Veterinary Services" means the provision of veterinary services to Participating Producers, by Licensed Practitioners in accordance with the terms of the Program.

"VSC" means a Veterinary Services Committee.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS

1. The Ministry

The Ministry shall:

- (i) administer the Program;
- (ii) consult with DAVA and NPAHN as required;
- (iii) respond to written correspondence in a timely manner;
- (iv) process claims in a timely manner; and,
- (v) appoint a staff contact person for NPAHN, DAVA and each VSC. The VSC contact person shall provide advisory assistance to the VSC and Program Co-ordinator as requested.

2. DAVA

DAVA shall:

- (i) serve as the first point of contact for Participating Veterinary Practices with respect to the Program;
- (ii) represent the interests of all Participating Veterinary Practices as they relate to the Program;
- (iii) recommend Program changes to the Ministry;
- (iv) consult with the Ministry as required; and,
- (v) advise the Ministry of contentious Program issues in a timely fashion.

3. NPAHN

NPAHN shall:

- (i) serve as the first point of contact for local VSCs regarding the Program;
- (ii) represent the interests of all VSCs as they relate to the Program;
- (iii) recommend to the Ministry veterinary practices for inclusion in the Program;
- (iv) recommend Program changes to the Ministry;
- (v) consult with the Ministry as required; and,
- (vi) advise the Ministry of contentious Program issues in a timely fashion.

4. VSC

The VSCs shall:

- (i) serve as the first point of contact for local Participating Producers regarding the Program;
- (ii) represent the interests of local Participating Producers as they relate to the Program;
- (iii) recommend to NPAHN veterinary practices for inclusion in the Program;
- (iv) recommend to the Ministry, via NPAHN when it would be advisable for more than one veterinary practice to share a Designation and when it would be advisable for a single veterinary practice to be allocated more than one Designation;
- (v) recommend Program changes to NPAHN;
- (vi) advise NPAHN of contentious Program issues in a timely fashion;
- (vii) recruit prospective veterinary practices; and,
- (viii) advise the Participating Veterinary Practice(s) and the Ministry appointed VSC contact person of local VSC meetings in advance.

D. VETERINARIAN RECRUITMENT POLICY

1. Subject to the availability of funding, the Ministry will reimburse one-third (33.33%) of the costs incurred by a VSC for an approved recruitment effort, up to a maximum of \$1,000, on the following conditions:
 - (a) NPAHN must notify the Ministry in writing that there is a distinct area within the Program Area where (i) there are no Participating Veterinary Practices with a Place of Business within 70 kilometres, and (ii) in NPAHN's opinion there is a need for such services;
 - (b) the Ministry determines that the number of Livestock farms in the area is large enough to support a Participating Veterinary Practice; and
 - (c) NPAHN and the VSC each provide funds to match the Ministry's dollar amount for the advertising in each recruitment effort.
2. The Ministry may, at its sole discretion, provide a greater contribution towards recruitment costs.

E. ISOLATED VETERINARY POLICY

1. The Ministry may designate a Participating Veterinary Practice as an Isolated Veterinary Practice under the following circumstances:
 - (a) the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business is located: (i) north of the 48th parallel; and, (ii) at least a 70 kilometre driving distance (one way) from any other Participating Veterinary Practices Place of Business; or
 - (b) upon written request by a VSC, submitted through NPAHN, where it is demonstrated to the Ministry's satisfaction that designation as an "Isolated Veterinary Practice" is required to retain or attract veterinary practices to the Program.
2. Once designated as an Isolated Veterinary Practice, the Participating Veterinary Practice will remain designated for the duration of the Program Period.

F. VSC SERVICE DESIGNATIONS

1. Each VSC has a specific number of service designations (a "Designation"). Each Designation represents the right to receive Veterinary Services pursuant to a VSA that will provide to a single Participating Veterinary Practice.
2. Subject to:
 - (a) receipt of a written request by a VSC, through NPAHN, that demonstrates to the Ministry's satisfaction that splitting a Designation is required to retain or attract veterinary services;
 - (b) a determination by the Ministry that there is sufficient program funding available to support any anticipated additional costs associated with the splitting of a Designation; and
 - (c) written agreement from the veterinary practices proposing to share the Designation, the Ministry may approve a request to split the Designation.
3. Where a VSC has two or more Designations, the VSC can choose to nominate a single veterinary practice to fill two or more Designations, provided that the VSC is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Ministry, that the single veterinary practice has the resources and capacity to fill two or more Designations.
4. Similarly, a veterinary practice may enter into a single VSA to fill two or more Designations of different VSCs, provided that the veterinary practice is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Ministry, that it has the resources and capacity to fill two or more Designations.

G. CONDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION

1. A Participating Veterinary Practice that provides or causes to be provided Veterinary Services throughout the Program Period in accordance with the terms of the VSA will be eligible for a Conditional Contributions in accordance with these Guidelines.
2. **Reimbursement of Costs Incurred by Participating Veterinary Practices to Travel to Provide Veterinary Services**

The Ministry will reimburse the cost of travel incurred by Participating Veterinary Practices to provide Veterinary Services and Substitute Veterinary Services up to a maximum of \$40,000.00 per Designation for the Program Period. The Ministry's Conditional Contribution will be calculated as follows:

- (i) \$1.20 per kilometre for eligible travel to provide services to Participating Producers whose place of business is within a 70 kilometre driving distance (one way) of the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business. Travel to calls performed beyond 5 kilometres of the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business will have ten (10) kilometres deducted from the total kilometres traveled for the round trip to Participating Producer's premises.

Eligible travel excludes:

- (a) Travel to calls performed within 5 kilometres (one way) of the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business, and,
 - (b) Travel to a Participating Producer's premises that is beyond 70 kilometres (one way) of the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business, except if the producer is an Isolated Producer (see section G, paragraph 2 (ii), below);
- (ii) \$1.20 per kilometre, up to a maximum of 250 kilometres per call, for travel to provide Veterinary Services to Isolated Producer(s) whose premises are beyond 70 kilometres driving distance (one way) of the Participating Veterinary Practice's Place of Business. Ten (10) kilometres will be deducted from the kilometres claimed for travel to the Participating Producer's premises.
 - (iii) \$1.20 per kilometre, up to a maximum of 250 kilometres per call, for travel to provide Substitute Veterinary Services. Ten (10) kilometres will be deducted from the kilometres claimed for travel to the Participating Producer's premises.

Where two or more veterinary practices are splitting a Designation and where one of these Participating Veterinary Practices is providing Substitute Veterinary Services for another Participating Veterinary Practice under the same Designation that Substitute Veterinary Services will not be eligible under section G.2 (iii), but will be eligible for inclusion under section G.2 (i).

3. Reimbursement of Costs Incurred by Isolated Veterinary Practices to Travel to Provide Veterinary Services

The Ministry will reimburse the cost of travel incurred by the Isolated Veterinary Practice to provide Veterinary Services and Substitute Veterinary Services up to a maximum of \$40,000.00 per Designation for the Program Period. The Ministry's contribution will be calculated as follows:

- (i) eligible travel to provide services to Participating Producers will be calculated using the following table:

Service Calls Completed during the Program Period	Payment
1 to 50	\$400/call
51 to 100	\$200/call
101 to 150	\$100/call
151 - 200	\$50/call
201 - 250	\$30/call
251 - 300	\$20/call
All additional calls	No payment

- (ii) \$1.20 per kilometre, up to a maximum of 250 kilometres per call, for travel by an Isolated Participating Veterinary Practice to provide Substitute Veterinary Services. Travel to calls performed under this activity will have ten (10) kilometres deducted from the kilometres claimed for travel to the premises of the Participating Producer.

Where two or more veterinary practices are splitting a Designation and where one of these Participating Veterinary Practices is providing Substitute Veterinary Services for another Participating Veterinary Practice under the same Designation that Substitute Veterinary Services will not be eligible under section G.3 (ii), but will be eligible for inclusion under section G.3 (i).

4. Reimbursement of Costs Incurred for Continuing Education and Conferences

The Ministry will pay a Conditional Contribution on a reimbursement basis, of fifty percent (50%) of actual travel, accommodation, meals and non-alcoholic beverages, and registration costs incurred by Participating Veterinary Practices to attend continuing education courses during the Program Period that are relevant to the provision of Veterinary Services up to a maximum of \$2,000 per Designation. Itemized receipts must be provided.

Participating Veterinary Practices are expected to make reasonable arrangements for travel and accommodations.

If a personal vehicle is used for travel to attend continuing education courses, reimbursement will be calculated at \$0.3375 per kilometre, subject to the fifty percent (50%) reimbursement limit and the \$2,000 maximum allowance.

No other costs related to attending courses or conferences are eligible for this amount (e.g. fuel, entertainment, etc.).

5. Reimbursement of Costs Incurred to Obtain Locum Assistance for Isolated Veterinary Practices

The Ministry will pay a Conditional Contribution on a reimbursement basis, of fifty percent (50%) of actual costs incurred by an Isolated Veterinary Practice or by a Participating Veterinary Practice during their first year of participating in the Program, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per Designation, to arrange for Substitute Veterinary Services to fulfil the obligations of the Isolated Veterinary Practice under the VSA for a locum period.

All Participating Veterinary Practices are eligible to provide Substitute Veterinary Services assistance to an Isolated Veterinary Practice. Costs incurred by a Participating Veterinary Practice who is providing locum assistance to an Isolated Veterinary Practice under this section G.5, are not eligible costs for a Ministry contribution under section G.2 or G.3.

H. PAYMENT OF CONDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION

1. Claims for reimbursement of eligible expenses shall be made in arrears for the following claim periods during the Program Period:
 - (i) April 1 to May 31
 - (ii) June 1 to July 31
 - (iii) August 1 to September 30
 - (iv) October 1 to November 30
 - (v) December 1 to January 31
 - (vi) February 1 to March 31
2. Claims for reimbursement of eligible expenses must be submitted:
 - (a) in the format set out in Appendix A to these Guidelines and must be received by the Ministry no later than 30 days after the end of each claim period (late claims may not be paid). In addition, the claim for the February 1 to March 31 claim period must be received by the Ministry no later than **March 31** (late claims will not be paid);
 - (b) with receipts for all expenditures claimed under section G, paragraphs 4, and 5 except for expenditures claimed for the use of a personal vehicle under section G, paragraph 4.
3. Claims are to be submitted via the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) application. TPON can be accessed through your My Ontario Account via [TPON \(gov.on.ca\)](http://tpon.gov.on.ca)
4. The Ministry at its sole discretion may hold back an amount not exceeding twenty per cent (20%) of the Conditional Contribution payable for each of the claim periods. At the time of the final payment for the Program Period, the Ministry will either:
 - (a) release to the Participating Veterinary Practice the total amount of the holdback, where the Program spending based on claims submitted for all Participating Veterinary Practices would not exceed the Program allocation; or
 - (b) where Program spending based on claims submitted for all Participating Veterinary

Practices would exceed the Program allocation,

- (i) release the total amount of the holdback to those Participating Veterinary Practices whose total claims for the current Program Period does not exceed \$25,000;
 - (ii) release a pro-rated amount of the holdback to Participating Veterinary Practices that have claims disbursed in excess of \$25,000. The pro-rated amount will be calculated by determining the difference between the total claims disbursed and the funds allocated for the Program for the Program Period. This difference will be used to calculate a percentage that will then be applied to the holdback for each Participating Veterinary Practices that has claims disbursed in excess of \$25,000. The resultant amount will determine the pro-rated amount of the holdback to be released to each Participating Veterinary Practices that has claims disbursed in excess of \$25,000.
- (c) Notwithstanding the foregoing, all Conditional Contributions reimbursed pursuant to the Program are subject to the maximum amounts payable as set out in Part G, above. Such maximum amounts payable are further subject to the number of Designations or parts thereof, applicable to specific VSAs.
5. Participating Veterinary Practices that are entitled under their VSA to providing Veterinary Services pursuant to more than one Designation must complete and submit a separate claim form for each of the Designations they are entitled to fill.