

Results of the AABP Salary Survey

Sarah A. Wagner,¹ DVM, PhD; Amber McCord,² MS, PhD

¹School of Veterinary Medicine, Texas Tech University, Amarillo, TX 79106

²College of Media & Communications, Texas Tech University, Amarillo, TX 79106

Abstract

There has not previously been information available about the incomes of bovine-focused veterinarians in the United States and Canada across career stages, locations and types of employment. A survey was distributed to bovine veterinarians in late 2022 to obtain information about their employment types, incomes, demographics and satisfaction. Across career stages and employment types, men earn more income than women in bovine-focused veterinary medicine. Job satisfaction increases with higher income and decreases in private practice with more hours worked.

Key words: income, veterinarians, bovine, satisfaction, gender

Requests for veterinarians with bovine-focused employment to complete an online survey were shared from August 29, 2022, to November 10, 2022. The link was shared multiple times with the members of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP, approximately 4,257 members) and once with a private Facebook group for cattle veterinarians with approximately 9,600 members. Responses were requested from veterinarians working in any type of job which involved some work focused on bovine species. The survey included questions about total veterinary-related income for the year 2021, along with questions about respondent demographics (e.g., age, gender, location, year of graduation from veterinary school) and their level of satisfaction with their job and with their compensation.

The survey received 969 responses, for an estimated response rate of 7.0% from all member of the AABP and the Facebook group. Responses that did not include income data were excluded from analyses, leaving 720 usable survey responses. Responses came from all 13 districts of the AABP, with response numbers ranging from 24 responses from District 13 in Western Canada to 91 responses from District 5 in the states of Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois. Most respondents graduated from veterinary school between 2010 and 2019 (282 responses, 41.2%) or between 2000 and 2009 (120 responses, 17.5%). Women and men were equally represented in the population of respondents, who were 47.8% men and 47.4% women.

Most respondents (51.5%) reported working 40, 45 or 50 hours per week. Comparisons of income were performed only for respondents who reported working at least 40 hours per week. Respondents were asked to report all income, in U.S. dollars, received from veterinary employment in 2021. For veterinarians in private practice, reported income ranged from \$13,969 to \$3,000,000, with a mean of \$148,333. Practitioners who owned practices in partnership reported higher mean incomes (\$257,176) than sole practice owners (\$167,169) or associates (\$95,999). For veterinarians employed outside private practice (e.g., industry, government, or academia) annual income ranged from \$24,877 to \$605,000, with a mean of \$141,467.

Across all employment types, men reported higher annual incomes than women (\$172,783 vs \$112,884). When a statistical analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the incomes of men and women while controlling for hours worked and years since graduation, incomes of men remained higher than those of women ($P < .001$). Incomes were found to be higher for men than women in both private practice and non-practice employment when they were compared independently while controlling for hours worked and years since graduation. Mean incomes for men were highest for practice owners (\$221,644) while mean incomes were highest for women working in industry (\$163,356).

Combining all employment types, the mean level of compensation satisfaction was 3.6 and overall job satisfaction was 3.8, rated on a 5-point scale with 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, and 5 = very satisfied. Satisfaction ratings did not differ between veterinarians in private practice or other areas of employment. Income had a significant, positive relationship with both satisfaction overall and compensation satisfaction. For practitioners, there was a negative relationship between hours worked and job satisfaction ($P < 0.001$); those who worked more hours were less satisfied with their jobs.

The limitations of this study are those typically recognized in surveys. There may be some differences between people who responded to the survey and those who did not, such that responses may not perfectly represent the general population of bovine-focused veterinarians. In addition, the information reported by survey respondents could not be verified for accuracy.

In summary, we found that practitioners and non-practitioners were equally satisfied with their jobs and compensation, and that satisfaction levels fell between “neither satisfied or dissatisfied” and “somewhat satisfied”. Factors that affected job satisfaction included a positive effect of higher income and a negative effect of more hours worked each week for those in private practice. In addition, we found that across employment types and decades since graduation, men have higher annual incomes than women in bovine veterinary medicine.

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