



ANIMAL
SCIENCES

Food Animal Veterinarian

A Veterinarian prevents, diagnoses, treats, and researches illness in food production animals such as cattle, swine, poultry, and fish.



Inspiring Minds to Grow


Funded by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity


career profile

Name: Olivia McDonald
Job Title: Food Animal
Veterinarian

Employer: Southwest Animal Hospital

Education: BS and DVM, University of Illinois: Champaign-Urbana


 I am a food animal veterinarian with Southwest Animal Hospital. I have always loved animals, particularly the animals on farms and ranches—cattle, goats, sheep, hogs, and horses. These are the animals I grew up around on the farm where I lived with my family. As I was scheduling classes to enter high school, a counselor told me about the work of a food animal veterinarian. That one encounter tweaked my interest and moved me toward the education and career.

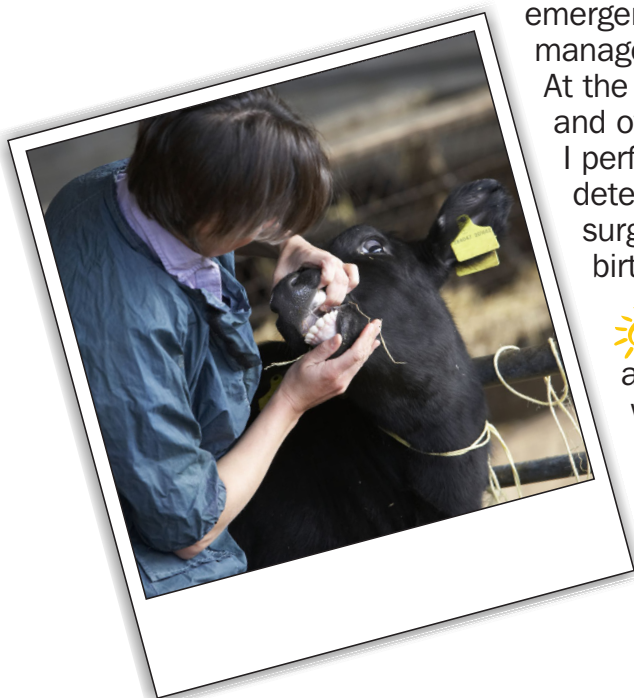
 In the job I have, I am at the veterinary hospital in the mornings and travel to farms and ranches in the afternoon. Most of these farms have hogs and cattle, some with large numbers. I also see animals at the hospital. Sometimes I treat them in the trailer that transports them, but, mostly, we unload them into the specialized large animal care facilities of the hospital. My

afternoons are filled with emergency calls and routine health management with large livestock operations.

At the large operations, I have a health management plan and oversee the workers in implementing the plan.

I perform a wide range of animal health practices, from determining vital signs to giving injections, performing surgery, and assisting female animals with difficult births.

 People often ask what I like about my work. The answer is simple: animals! I am able to help animals when they are diseased or injured. In addition, I help them stay healthy through vaccinations and other activities such as feed recommendations and housing needs. I always enjoy working with the owners and caregivers of the animals. When I help them do a better job, I help the animals. Being on the farms and seeing animals and people is a real pleasure.



Food Animal Veterinarian

overview



A **food animal veterinarian** is a DVM who provides veterinary services in the production of food animals.

suggested high school courses



[animal science](#), veterinary assisting, biology, mathematics, chemistry, and communications

experience needed



Begin in high school by job shadowing a food animal DVM and with part-time jobs on farms and ranches with animals and in veterinary clinics and hospitals with a focus on food animal medicine. Plan and implement a related Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program.

degree(s) required



A doctor of veterinary medicine (DVM) degree is required. Most who pursue veterinary study have a BS degree in animal science, biology, or a related area.

potential employers



large food animal production operations, veterinary hospitals and clinics, animal pharmaceutical companies

salary range



\$50,000 to \$90,000

employment outlook and trends



The future demand for food animal veterinarians is **good**.

professional organizations



American Veterinary Medical Association www.avma.org/
American Association of Bovine Practitioners www.aabp.org/
American Association of Swine Veterinarians www.aasp.org/



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