



# ANIMAL HEALTH

Livestock production is the largest contributor to the agriculture industry in Kansas, representing a wide breadth of farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses. Kansas is a leader in livestock production, largely due to the presence of a large concentration of public and private entities in the animal health and nutrition sectors including research and production of therapeutics, diagnostics, biologics, and nutrition and feed products. Kansas sits within the KC Animal Health Corridor, a region which houses more than 300 animal health companies that account for 56% of total worldwide animal health, diagnostics and pet food sales. The presence of strong agriculture educational resources and an expansive transportation network together create a sound foundation for animal health success in Kansas.

Preparing for an animal health emergency situation is a priority in Kansas, and government and private industry have taken multiple steps to make Kansas a recognized leader in foreign animal disease preparedness. Kansas regularly exercises its foreign animal disease response plan and in 2018 created a pilot program, CattleTrace, which is now a standalone organization, U.S. CattleTrace. The goal is to develop a national infrastructure for disease traceability and encourage private industry's use of the infrastructure for individualized management practices. Kansas was the first state in the nation to work with feedlots to implement individual biosecurity plans, and in 2017 the Kansas Secure Food Supply project was launched by the Kansas Department

of Agriculture Division of Animal Health with a goal of working with Kansas dairy, beef, and pork producers to develop Secure Food Supply Plans. To date, more than 1.08 million head of beef cattle, 97,000 head of dairy cows, and 1.9 million head of pigs have been covered under Secure Food Supply Plans.

In order to continue growing animal agriculture in Kansas, there is a critical shortage of food animal veterinarians willing to work in rural America. In addition to working with current veterinary students to expose them to careers in food animal practices, there is also a need to conduct outreach with high school students interested in veterinary medicine.

Although Kansas is well established as a leader within the KC Animal Health Corridor, continuing this growth will require collaborative efforts from private and public stakeholders to develop strategies to overcome challenges facing the industry. Expanding educational opportunities and developing partnerships between animal health companies and research facilities will enhance growth of existing businesses as well as attract new enterprises. Finally, it will be critical to maintain communication with policy makers to ensure they remain focused on protecting animal health as well as public health and the global food supply while encouraging economic development within the animal health industry.

## Status

According to the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Kansas bioscience industry employs more than 19,000 people across approximately 1,600 establishments, with a heavy concentration of agricultural feedstock and chemicals, and in research, testing and medical labs. Kansas was also selected to be home for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, a state-of-the-art biocontainment laboratory for the study of diseases that threaten both America's animal agricultural industry and public health. USDA employees are working hard during these early stages of the phased science transition, but it will take a couple of years to transfer the full science mission to NBAF from Plum Island. NBAF will strengthen the nation's ability to conduct research, develop vaccines, diagnose emerging diseases and train veterinarians. The decision to locate NBAF in Kansas is further confirmation that Kansas not only has a strong foundation and presence in the current animal health and bioscience sectors, but that the state's prominence in this critical sector of animal and human health will continue into the future.

In order to grow and expand animal agriculture in Kansas and across the nation, it is imperative that there is a sufficient number of large- and mixed-practice veterinarians who are willing to serve in rural locations in proximity to industry. According to American Veterinary Medical Association in 2021, the most recent year for which statistics are available, about 15 percent of veterinarians practiced on food animals or in mixed-animal practices.

The foundation of a prosperous industry today and into the future is a healthy herd. In Kansas, government and private industry work closely together to advance foreign animal disease preparedness, in an effort to be the best prepared state in the nation with regard to animal health emergencies. In addition to annual, multi-day, fully functional foreign animal disease exercises, Kansas is also a national leader in the implementation of Secure Food Supply Plans on dairy, beef and pork operations across the state. The goal is to develop a national infrastructure for disease traceability and encourage private industry's use of the infrastructure for individualized management practices. As of June 2022, U.S. CattleTrace has members in over 23 states and over 2 million cattle sightings/reads in the database.

Kansas has numerous universities and community colleges that provides degrees in pre-veterinary medicine. Fort Hays State University, Wichita State University, and Emporia State University all offer pre-veterinary medicine degrees. The University of Kansas offers degrees in bioscience-related fields. The College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University is ranked among the nation's top veterinary medicine schools. In addition, the K-State College of Agriculture's Department of Animal Sciences and Industry is one of the largest in the country. The department maintains research facilities for beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, horses and sheep which are located in close proximity to campus.

## Successes

- In order to help ensure a sufficient supply of food animal veterinarians in rural communities, the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association, the Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas, and the U.S. Congress are being proactive and innovative in recruitment and development of food animal veterinarians.
- The Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas was established by the Kansas Legislature in 2006 to provide financial incentive for graduates to practice in rural Kansas communities. Program participants currently receive up to \$25,000 annually to support tuition for not more than four years. To date, 80 students have been admitted into the program.
- A collaborative partnership that includes the Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas Department of Agriculture, K-State, and individual producers came together to conduct a pilot project aimed at developing and testing a purpose-built infrastructure capable of tracing cattle movement through the supply chain for disease traceability purposes. U.S. CattleTrace has continued to collect movement data on over 2 million cattle and guide the development of enhanced disease traceability systems for the entire U.S.
- Kansas conducts an annual functional exercise to practice the state's ability to respond to a foreign animal disease. The exercise regularly has more than 250 participants, including local, state, federal, and public agencies as well as private businesses in various animal agriculture sectors.