

The Veterinary Workforce A Canadian Perspective

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Government of Canada
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What I would like you to take away today.....

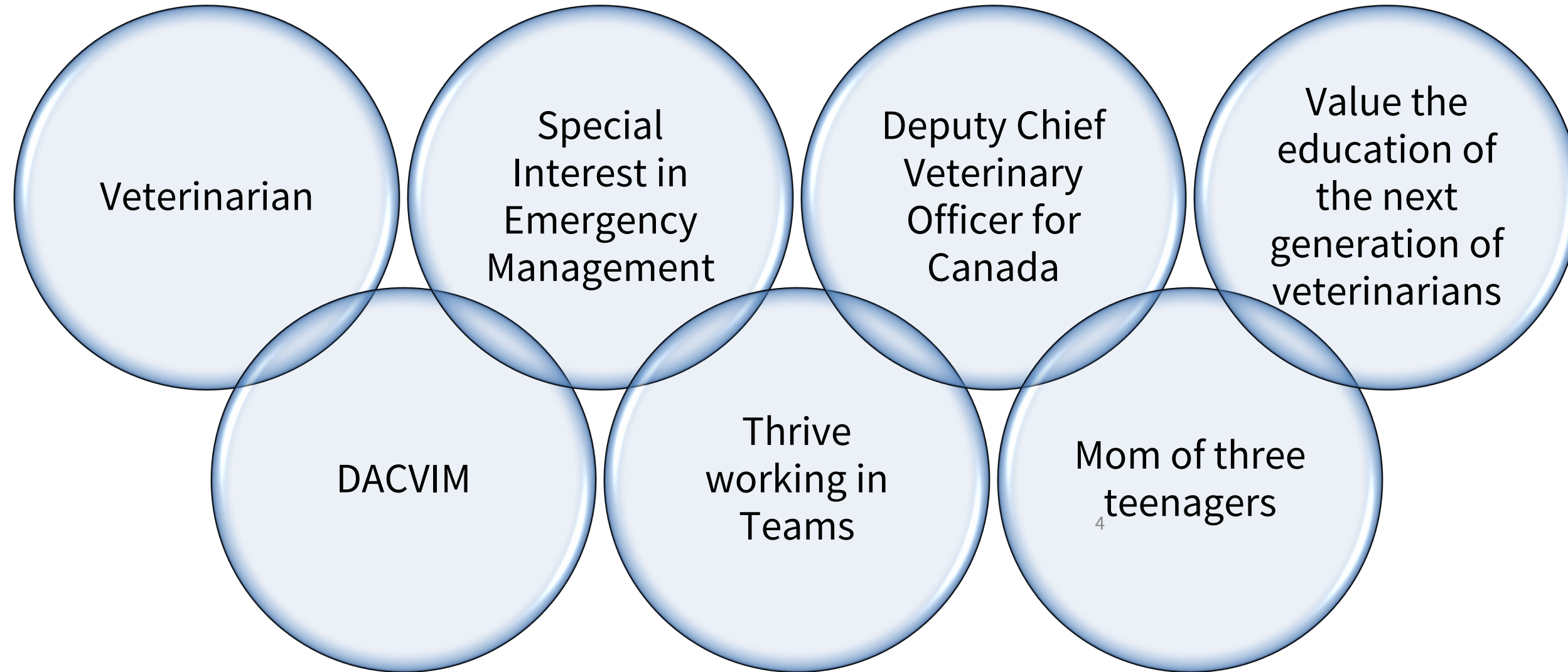
- A greater awareness of the similarities and differences within our collective veterinary workforce
- The feedback we receive from our collective veterinary workforce is
 - Sometimes hard to hear
 - Doesn't appear to have a “quick fix”
 - Demonstrates the conflict the veterinary workforce experiences – the public, animal owners, within the profession and within practices
- There is no perfect answer
 - As leadership, it is critical that we gather information, be adaptable and be compassionate
 - We will need to develop strategies and solutions that can be adopted at the local, regional, national and perhaps international level
- Our approach must be collaborative – counter competitive approaches will not serve us in the long run
- We need to be committed to the “long haul....”

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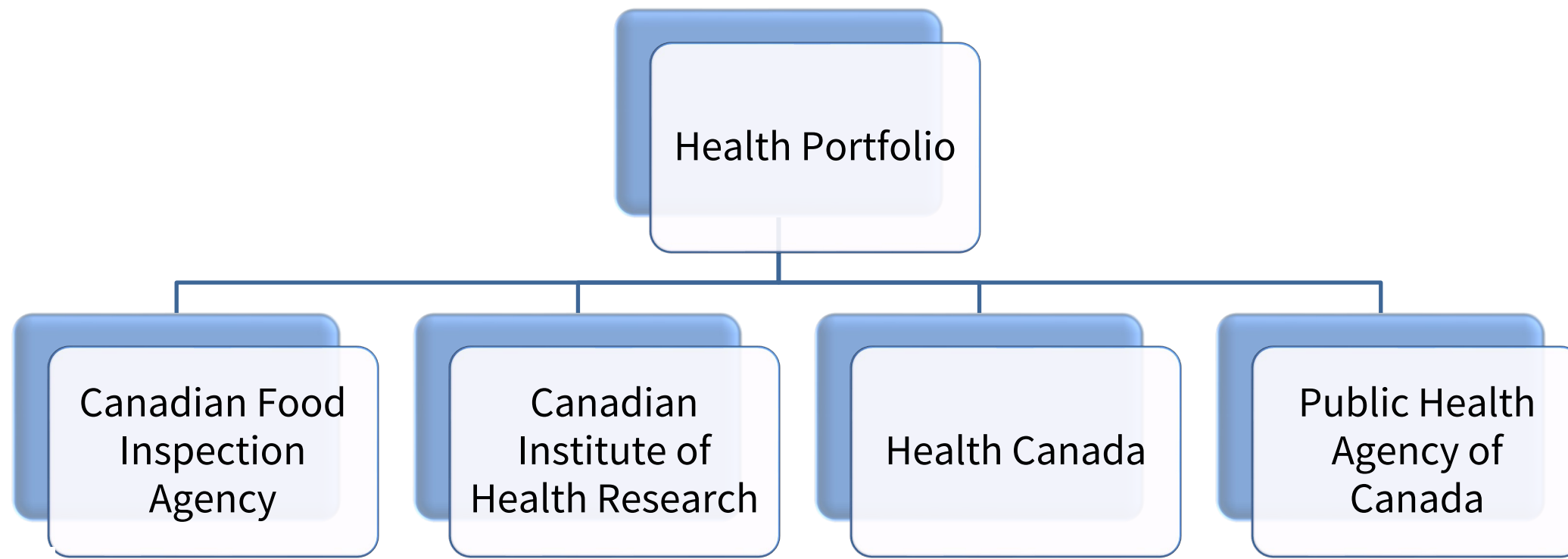
Outline

- Background details
 - The Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canada by the Numbers
 - Maps and demographics
- Framing the issue
- Stakeholders
- The National perspective
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency perspective
- The Road Ahead
- Acknowledgements

A brief introduction



The Canadian Food Inspection Agency



The Canadian Food Inspection Agency – “Who we are and What we do”



The Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer of Canada

- Office Leadership
 - Dr. Mary Jane Ireland – CVO
 - Dr. Cathy Furness – DCVO
- The CVO role highlights the importance of ***veterinary science*** to good public policy given the social, political, animal health, public health and economic consequences associated with serious animal diseases.



One Health

Canadian
Agriculture



World Organization
for Animal Health



Federal Legislation: The Health of Animals Act



An Act respecting diseases and toxic substances that may affect animals or that may be transmitted by animals to persons, and respecting the protection of animals.

LEGAL OBLIGATION TO REPORT THE SUSPICION OF A REPORTABLE DISEASE TO CFIA VETERINARIAN. THE HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT, SECTION 5.

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Canada by the Numbers



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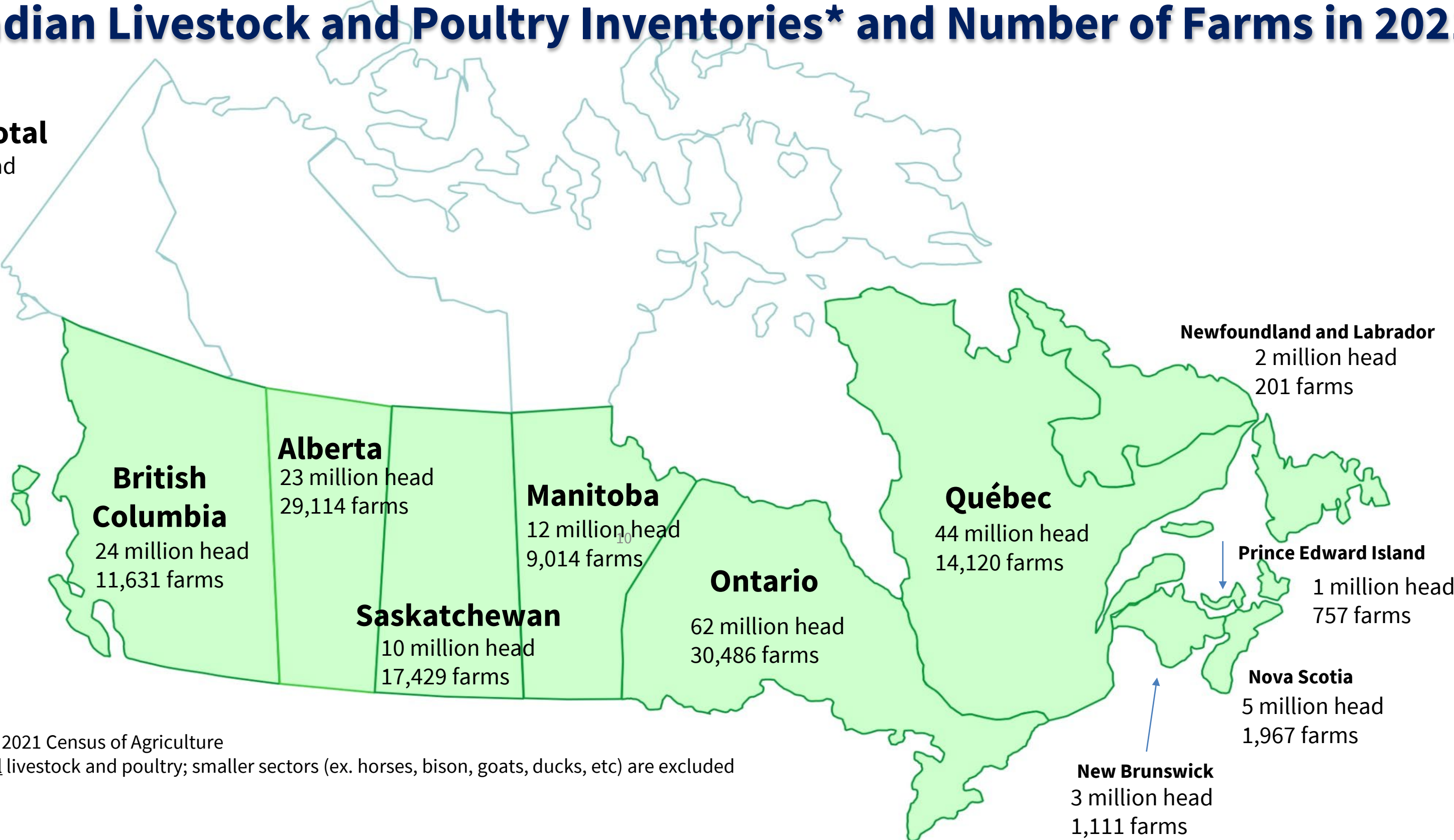
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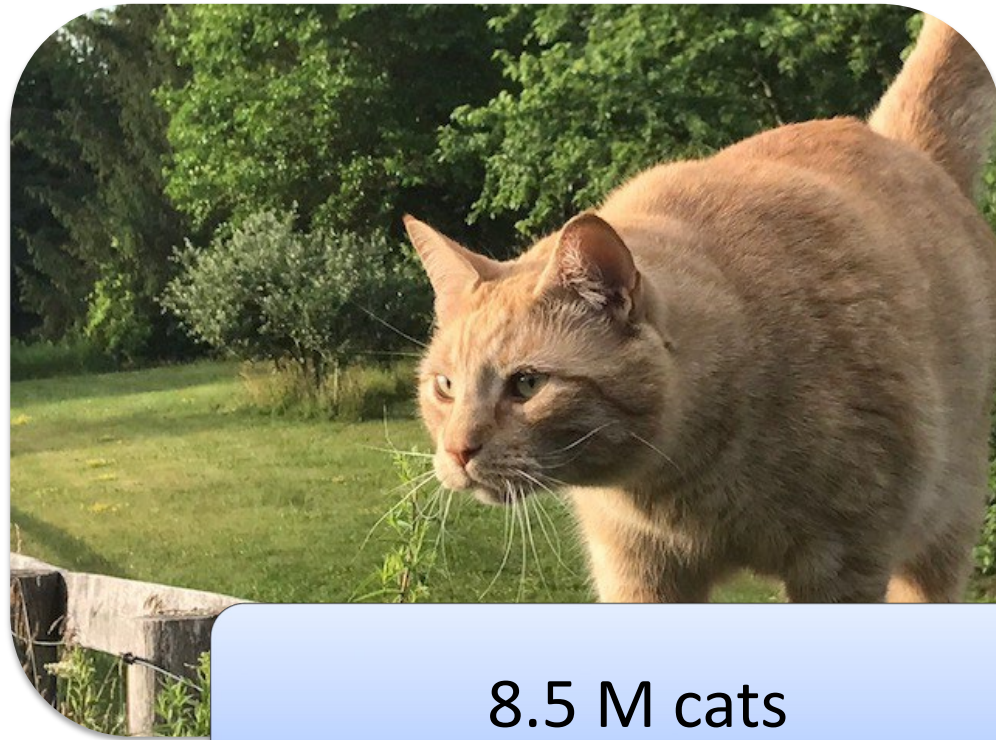
Canadian Livestock and Poultry Inventories* and Number of Farms in 2021

Canada Total
187 million head
115,830 farms



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Agriculture
* Note: does not include all livestock and poultry; smaller sectors (ex. horses, bison, goats, ducks, etc) are excluded

Companion Animals - 2022



8.5 M cats



7.9 M dogs

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Others – horses, exotics,
avian ?

[Latest Canadian Pet Population Figures Released \(globenewswire.com\)](https://www.globenewswire.com)

Practice Demographics - 2020

% of Veterinarians Spending at Least Some Time Working with Species

Dogs	89%
Cats	89%
Other companion animals	24%
Equine	16%
Beef Cattle	15%
Dairy Cattle	10%
Sheep/Goats	10%
Swine	4%
Poultry	3%

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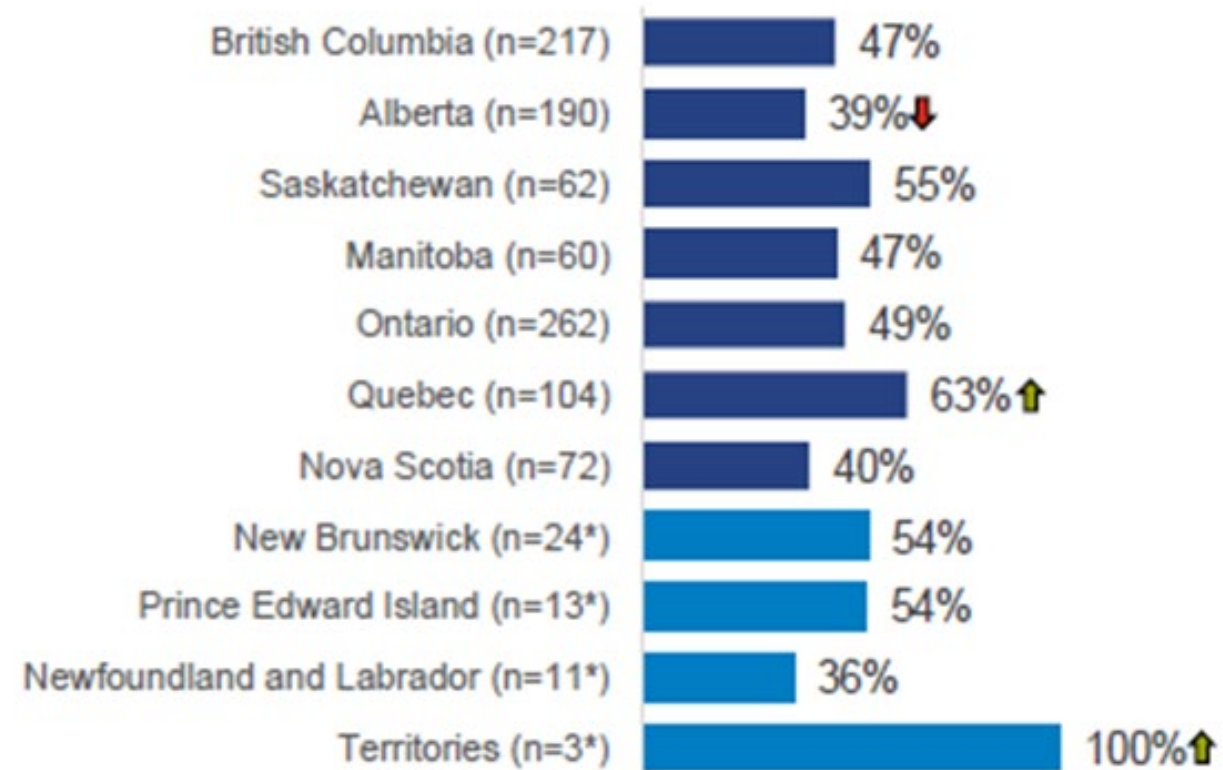
2020 CVMA Workforce Study Final Report

Veterinary Services Challenges – its more than just numbers!

Prevalence of Open Veterinarian Positions in Canada, by Location



Looking to Hire a New Veterinarian



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Demand4. Does your clinic currently have openings for additional veterinarians or veterinary technicians?
Base: Currently employed veterinarians (n=1019)

© Kynetec May 7, 2020 | CVMA – Veterinary Workforce Study

* - Caution Small Base Sizes

↓↑ - Shows Significant Difference

What we know

- The rate of graduating new veterinarians is about equal to the number of veterinarians retiring

But anecdotally

- Reduced access to veterinary services in remote areas
- Reduced availability of food animal veterinarians – private practice
- Reduced availability of public service veterinary capacity for inspection (federal and provincial)
- There are underserved pockets throughout the country
- Quebec -challenges in serving the Francophone population

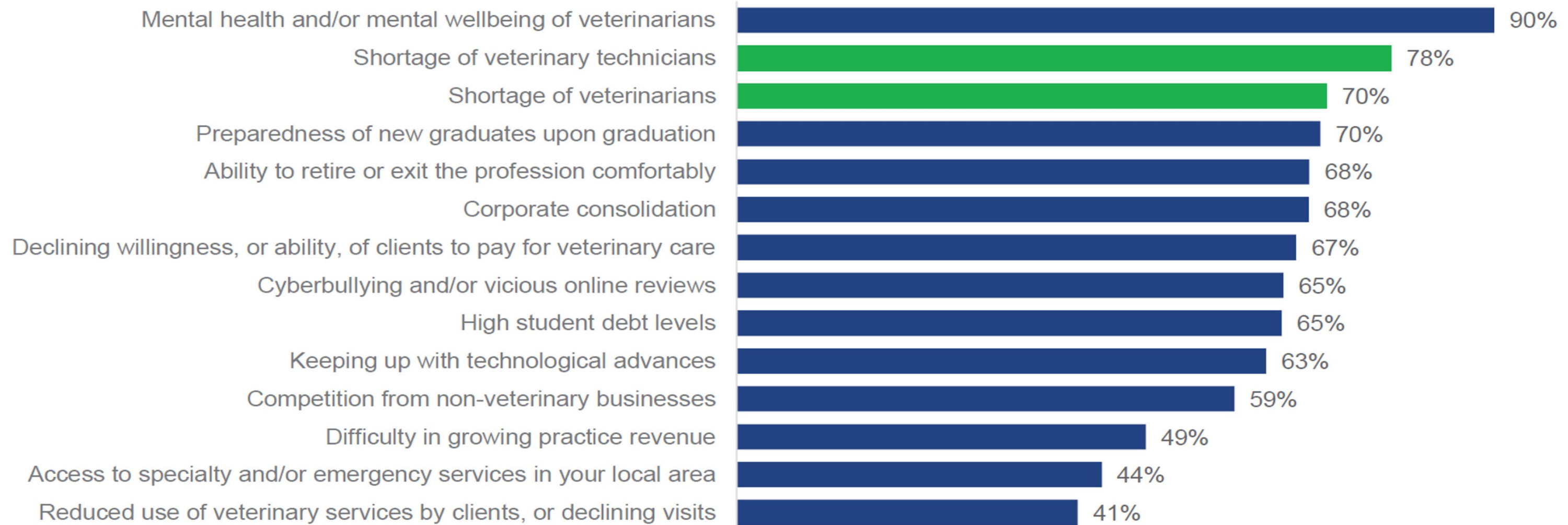
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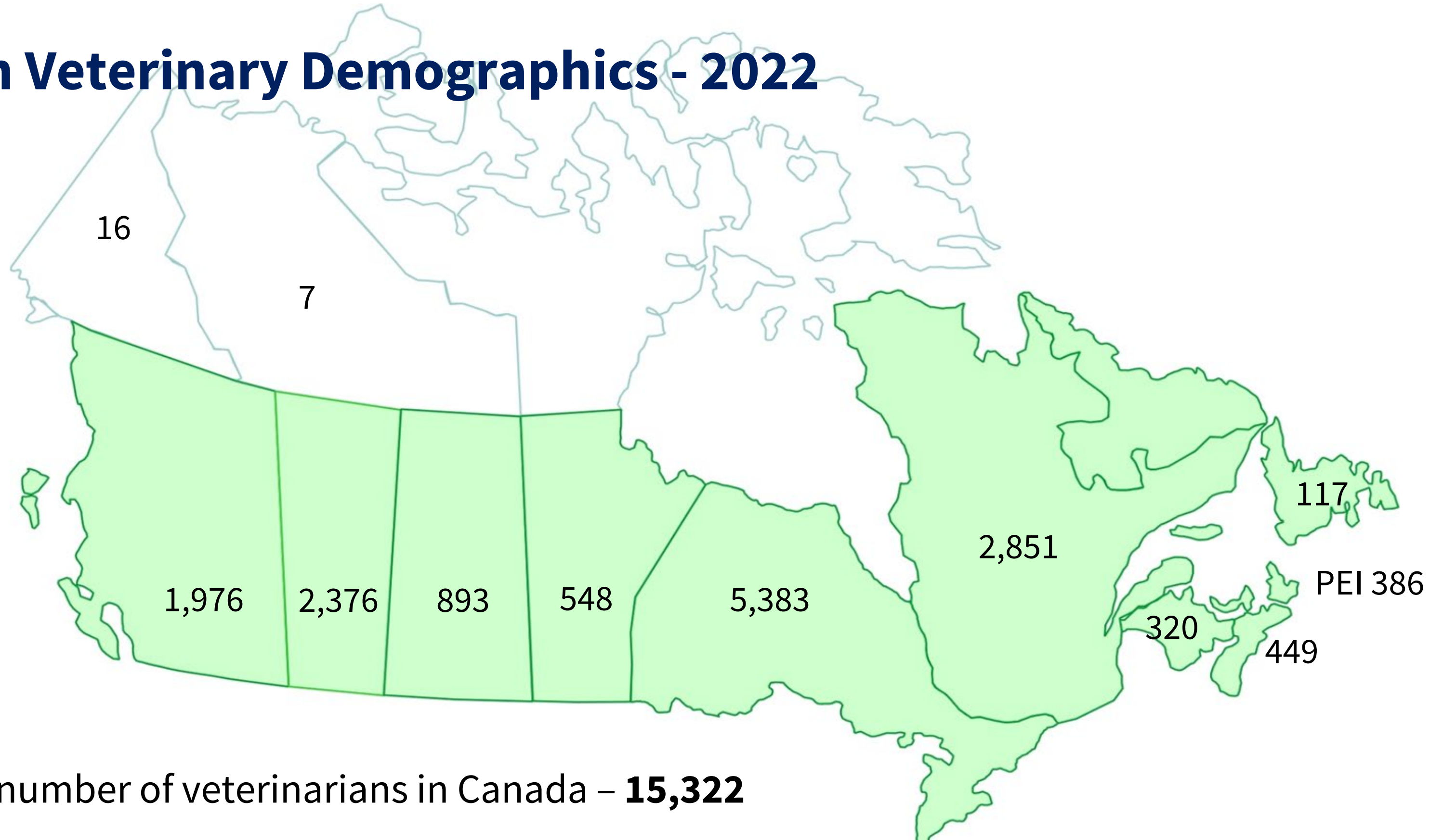
Issues Facing the Veterinary Profession



Issue1. Listed below are several issues you may or may not consider to be significant challenges faced by the veterinary profession today. Please rate each issue using the scale below.
Base: All graduated veterinarians (n=1044)

© Kynetec May 7, 2020 | CVMA – Veterinary Workforce Study

Canadian Veterinary Demographics - 2022



Approximate number of veterinarians in Canada – **15,322**

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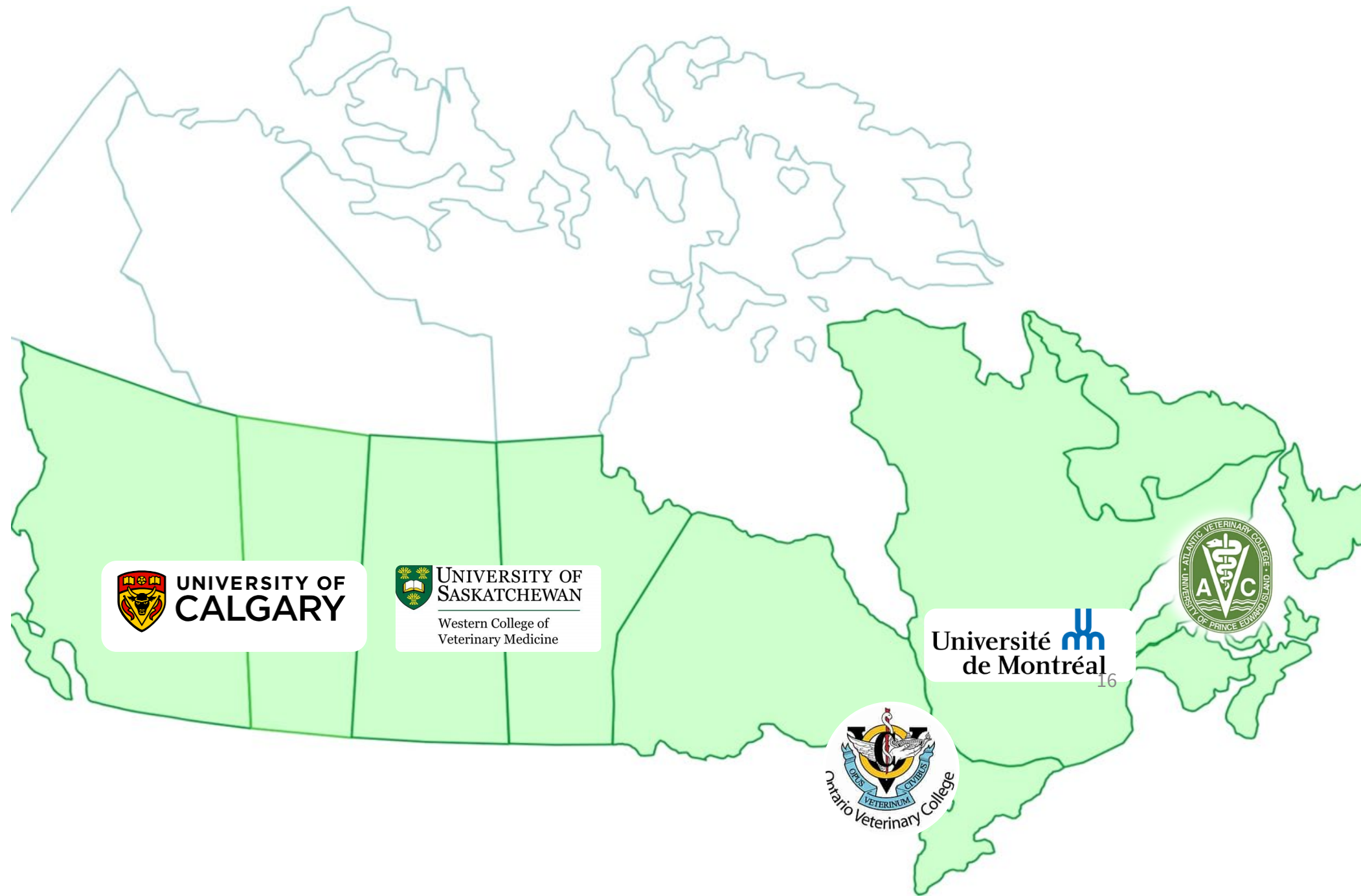
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[Statistics | Canadian Veterinary Medical Association \(canadianveterinarians.net\)](https://canadianveterinarians.net)

Canadian Veterinary Schools



College Facts

- Atlantic Veterinary College – 60 seat
- Saint-Hyacinthe – 96 seats
- Ontario Veterinary College – 130 seats
- Western College of Veterinary Medicine – 88 seats
- University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – 50 seats (working to 100 seats)
- Rate of graduation = rate of retirement

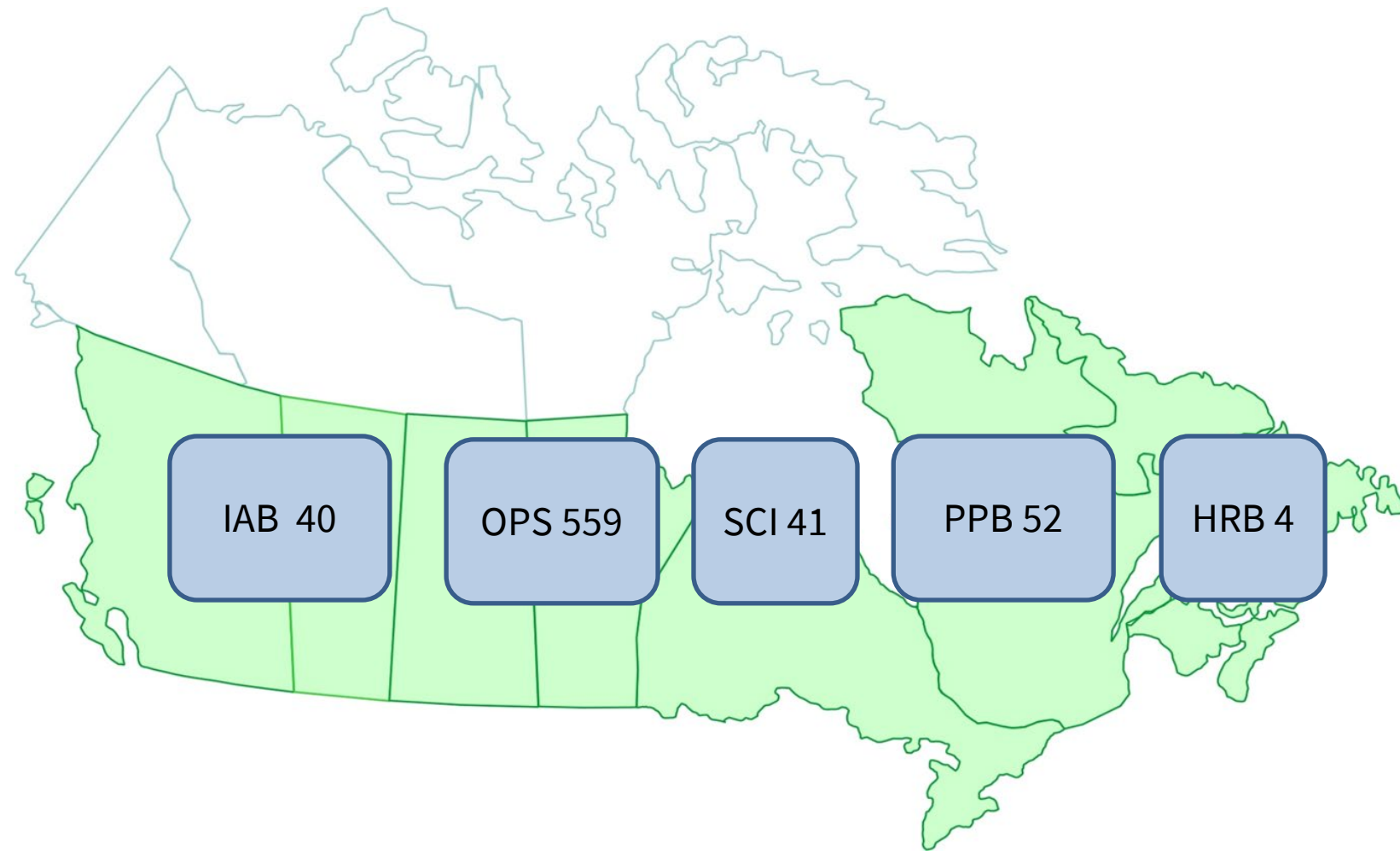
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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency



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The CFIA is the largest employer of veterinarians in Canada – **696 veterinarians**
Represents 10% of the CFIA workforce

Veterinarians are essential to the CFIA's commitment to protecting animal health and welfare in Canada.

- The CFIA is the largest employer of veterinarians in Canada
- Career options at the CFIA can range from technical positions in Canada and in international settings to senior executive and leadership roles
- CFIA veterinarians work in a broad range of environments and perform a wide variety of critical tasks, such as animal disease surveillance and control, international standard-setting for animal health, and veterinary biologics and biotechnology.
- Vacancies in veterinary specific positions can have significant impacts
 - Delayed times for import and export requests
 - Stress on the delivery of Agency programs

Framing the Issue - What do the numbers tell us?

Agriculture is diverse across Canada

- Increasing interactions at the urban/rural interface
- Specific pockets of high density animal production
- Remote areas with limited access to services
- Regional distribution of commodity production
- Companion animal ownership continues to rise - more owners are seeking veterinary care

Canada is just maintaining the veterinary population

- We graduate just enough students from Canadian Veterinary Schools to account for retirement

There are vacancies in critical areas of Veterinary practice in Canada

- Livestock and poultry medicine
- Regulatory medicine
- Food safety
- Public health



[What Are Wicked Problems and How Might We Solve Them? | IxDF \(interaction-design.org\)](https://www.interaction-design.org/)

The Canadian Approach



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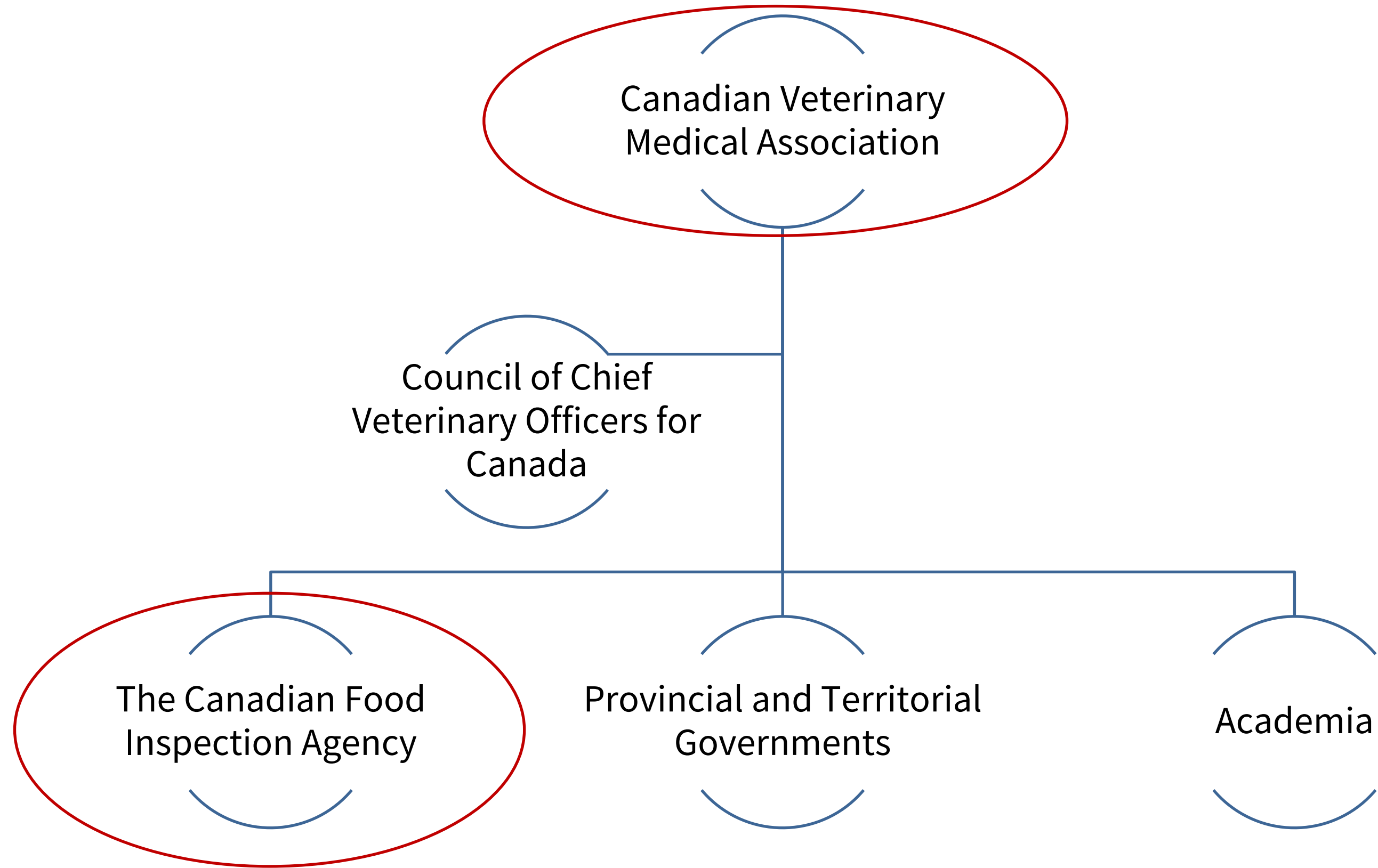
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-  Canadian Food Inspection Agency
-  Provinces and Territories
-  Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
-  Provincial Veterinary Medical Associations
-  Canadian Council of Veterinary Registrars
-  Council of Chief Veterinary Officers for Canada
-  Veterinary and Veterinary Technician Colleges



The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

Vision

- The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association is the voice of the Canadian veterinary profession in promoting animal welfare and One Health, to ensure optimal care for animals, people and the environment.

Mission

- The CVMA is the national and international voice for Canada's veterinarians, providing leadership and advocacy for veterinary medicine.

Priorities

- Leadership on national veterinary issues, animal welfare advocacy and a successful career and balanced life

[Home | Canadian Veterinary Medical Association \(canadianveterinarians.net\)](https://canadianveterinarians.net)



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CVMA Workforce Summit 2022 – Priority Pathways Identified

Veterinary Professional Supply

- ⦿ Increase the capacity of Canadian Veterinary Colleges
- ⦿ Increase animal health technology graduates
- ⦿ Ameliorate immigration processes
- ⦿ Develop and implement restricted/specific licensure
- ⦿ Increase National Examining Board capacity for international graduates
- ⦿ Attract international graduates to Canada
- ⦿ Assess/resolve shortages in rural/remote areas

Retention and Veterinary Service Delivery

- ⦿ Study on Attrition/Retention
- ⦿ Tools for effective management and retention
- ⦿ Wellness tools and services
- ⦿ Build and manage effective veterinary teams
- ⦿ Promote pet insurance
- ⦿ Public awareness campaign on Veterinarian value and roles

Report of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Congress on Veterinary Workforce June 2022



“There is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time” Desmond Tutu

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Piece of the Puzzle

Rules of engagement - Think about our span of influence and what actions are within our control

- Collect data to understand the scope of the problem
 - Understand who our partners are, their needs and interests
 - Understand where our needs are similar and where we can support similar strategies
 - Understand when and where we need a CFIA specific focus
- Understand the current and future needs of the Agency
 - What skill sets do we need to protect food, animals, plants today
 - What skill sets will we need in the future

Never give up !!!



[never give up meme - Bing images](#)

As a side note..... It's a big puzzle



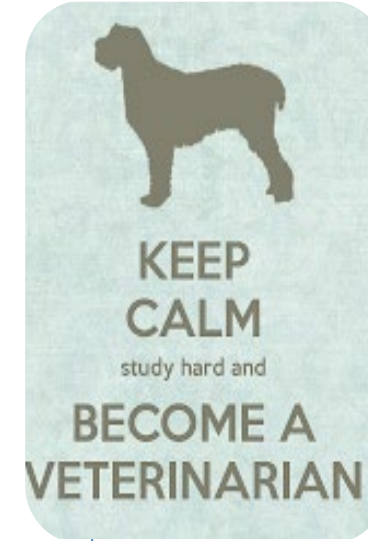
We won't touch on

- Wellness tools and practices
- The further integration of registered veterinary technicians into the scope of practice
- Public communication pieces

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – National Collaboration Efforts



Partnering with the Council of Chief Veterinary Officers for Canada



Partnering with Canada's Veterinary Colleges



Connecting within the Federal Family

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – National Collaboration Efforts

Partnering with the Council of Chief Veterinary Officers for Canada

- Chief Veterinary Officers of each provincial and territorial jurisdiction in Canada are the regulatory and technical leaders in each province that represent their respective government departments.
- The CCVO engages in
 - Regular discussion and communication to support awareness
 - initiatives at regional veterinary colleges
 - provincial program development related to the veterinary workforce
 - Collaborate to support regional initiatives at the colleges
 - Funding to support infrastructure or increase the allocation of seats
 - Provides representation to national workforce initiatives – representing the collective voice of the CCVO

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency – National Collaboration Efforts

Partnering with Canada's Veterinary Colleges

- The CFIA collaborates with Canada's veterinary colleges through
 - The Deans Council - Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Medicine
 - Individual engagement opportunities
- Engagement opportunities include
 - Research collaborations
 - Canadian Animal Health Laboratory Network
 - Participation in the veterinary curriculum

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – National Collaboration Efforts

Connecting within the Federal Family

- The CFIA serves a liaison role between the national veterinary community and other Federal departments
 - Immigration and Citizenship Canada
 - Health Canada – access to veterinary drugs
 - Public Health Agency of Canada
 - Indigenous Services Canada

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Focused Efforts



Enhancing the awareness and importance of the role of a public service veterinarian in Canada



Are there opportunities for limited veterinary licensed roles in the CFIA?



Building opportunities for movement within the CFIA organization

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Focused Efforts

- **Enhancing the awareness and importance of the role of a public service veterinarian in Canada**
- **Veterinary Liaison Initiative**
 - Objective – “de-mystify” the CFIA by embedding a CFIA veterinarian into the day to day activities of each veterinary college
 - Lead public service curriculum
 - Enable opportunities for students to participate in CFIA activities
 - Facilitate research collaborations
- **Veterinary Student Summer Internship Program (VSSIP)**
 - 12 week experience for students enrolled in a Canadian veterinary school
 - Introduction to opportunities within the CFIA - research work, field opportunities, meet and greets
- **Pilot Project – development of a First Responders club at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC)**
 - Providing an opportunity for students to learn about emergency management and disease response

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Focused Efforts

Are there opportunities for limited veterinary licensed roles in the CFIA?

- This concept is still in the exploratory phase – there are many aspects to consider including
 - Does a limited license in a large organization create a “two tiered” system?
 - How can limited licensing be applied to a national organization when
 - the licensing of veterinarians is issued at the provincial level
 - Not all provincial legislation enables limited licensure
 - Would limited licensing ease the vacancy challenges within specific programs at the CFIA?
 - Is limited licensing a “quick fix” to a larger issue?

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Focused Efforts

Building opportunities for movement within the CFIA organization

- Demonstrating that employees are valued and respected
- Driving engagement across a large organization – it's a challenge!
- Leadership and educational opportunities
 - National Veterinary Community
- Transparency in decision making
 - A clear and equitable pathway to progress through the organization

The Road Ahead

- At the CFIA – we are committed to the “long haul”
 - There are “quick wins” but no “quick fixes”
- We need to push the boundaries of our traditional way of thinking
 - Adopt the “fail fast – fail forward” mantra
- Our people will continue to be the strength of the Agency
 - As leaders, we need to understand, lead from behind and be compassionate
- We need to let our teams drive innovative solutions and processes

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Acknowledgements

It is important to acknowledge the significant leadership contributions of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association in addressing the veterinary workforce shortage in Canada.

In particular, the expertise and dedication of the Workforce Advisory Group
Chair – Dr. Phil Buote

CVMA reports consulted for this presentation:

- *Expanding Veterinary Medicine Capacity in Canada 2022 – 2023* – Report of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Congress on Veterinary Workforce, June 2022
- Report of the Working Group on the 2020 CVMA Workforce Study, March 1, 2021
- 2020 CVMA Workforce Study Final Report



Thank you

