

## **Vet Bonding Eligibility**

### **Background**

To address shortages of vets in rural areas, the Government has committed to a voluntary bonding scheme for vets. The scheme provides a taxable payment of \$11,000 for every year, up to five years, that vets work in an eligible area. Payment for the first three years will be made as a lump sum at the end of three years, with an annual payment for the fourth and fifth year.

For the first year of the scheme, veterinary science graduates who completed their qualification in 2005 or later (ie: graduated in 2006 or later) can also apply if they are already working in an eligible understaffed, rural area.

2009 will also be a transition year for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, which administers the scheme, to work with veterinary organisations to review eligibility for the scheme to ensure that it continues to target those areas with the greatest need.

### **Who is eligible?**

The scheme is available to veterinary science graduates who have completed their qualification within 12 months of applying for the scheme. Graduates who completed their veterinary science qualification in 2005 or later (ie: graduated in 2006 or later) can also apply in 2009 if they are already working in an eligible understaffed, rural area.

To be eligible, you must:

- be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- have a Bachelor of Veterinary Science from Massey University
- be registered to practice in New Zealand and hold a current practicing certificate;
- have a permanent, full-time position in an eligible practice in one of the targeted understaffed, rural areas; and
- work with production animals as part of this position.

If you have been offered a role in an eligible position you can still apply for the scheme whether or not you have started working.

### **What are the targeted areas?**

In 2009, areas qualifying for the scheme are the territorial authorities of:

- Gisborne (excluding the urban area of Gisborne city)
- Wairoa
- Central Hawkes Bay
- Tararua
- Buller, Grey and Westland
- Southland
- Gore

For information on territorial authorities and the council they are administered by you can go to the local council website, [www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf](http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf).

### **What kinds of practices or places of work will be eligible?**

The scheme targets mixed practices and practices based on production animal veterinary medicine, or places of work which are servicing the needs of livestock industries.

### **If I meet the criteria and eligibility requirements, what am I entitled to?**

You are entitled to a taxable payment of \$11,000 for every year, up to five years, that you work in an eligible area. Payment for the first three years will be made as a lump sum at the end of three years, with an annual payment for the fourth and fifth year.

**How do I apply?**

You will need to complete an application form to be accepted into the scheme. This is available on the MAF website. You will also need to get your practice principal or manager to attest to your eligibility for the scheme.

**When do applications begin?**

Applications for the scheme can be made from 1 March 2009. Information and application forms will be available on MAF's website, [www.maf.govt.nz](http://www.maf.govt.nz).

**What happens if I change practice?**

If you change workplace, and your new workplace is also eligible under the scheme, you can continue to receive the payments you are entitled to. You will need to get the practice principal or manager at your new workplace to attest to your eligibility for the scheme.

If you change workplace and your new workplace is not eligible, you will no longer qualify for payments under the scheme.

**How can I find out more?**

Information and application forms will be available from the MAF website, [www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/voluntary-bonding-scheme.htm](http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/voluntary-bonding-scheme.htm) or by emailing [vetscheme@maf.govt.nz](mailto:vetscheme@maf.govt.nz).