

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am reaching out to you as a practicing veterinarian, a constituent, and a citizen.

Minnesota continues to hold a high ranking nationally in animal agriculture. Overall, the state is ranked #8 in livestock (\$7.6 billion/year). There are over 73,000 farms in the state, a vital part of the state's economy.

Veterinarians and veterinary personnel play a critical role in livestock farming. Farms can't operate successfully without veterinarians as partners. Grocery stores can't provide food for consumers without healthy animals and successful farmers.

Some states have divided out food animal veterinarians from companion animal veterinarians as essential workers. That would be a mistake for Minnesota. Companion animal veterinarians take the same oath as food animal veterinarians. For companion animal veterinarians, this means protecting and preserving the human animal bond, which in these times some need more than ever to help them through long periods of isolation from other people. Companion animal veterinarians provide essential services, such as access to emergency veterinary services for families and their pets, and serve as a front line for recognition of emerging infectious and zoonotic disease. They view themselves as public health partners working alongside the Minnesota Department of Health and the Board of Animal Health.

Further, and unlike other health professions, veterinarians can provide valuable, needed services for their patients without close human to human contact. Veterinarians have already started meeting their clients at their vehicles to receive the patient and in the process have eliminated the need for the animal owner to enter the veterinary hospital.

Please categorize veterinarians, veterinary personnel and veterinary facilities as essential workers and business.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sally Smith
Red River Veterinary Clinic
Red River, MN