A Report of Findings:

2022 Equine Medicine Salary & Lifestyle Survey

Conducted on Behalf of

The American Association of Equine Practitioners

October 2022
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Survey Background & Methodology

In 2007, the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) conducted a survey of its members to determine the average salary among those practicing equine medicine. Because it had been 15 years since the last salary survey was conducted, AAEP believed it was time to revisit the question of salaries within the industry, with a specific interest in exploring the salaries of recent graduates.

Data for the following report were collected and analyzed by Comer Research Consultants of Winchester, Kentucky. On September 7, 2022, an email was sent to 6,564 AAEP members located in the United States inviting them to participate in the salary survey. The email, which was in the form of a letter from the president of AAEP, included a hot link to the online survey instrument. Members were given a deadline of September 23 to participate in the survey. Two subsequent reminder emails were sent to those who had not clicked through to the survey instrument (i.e., non-responders), and the survey deadline was extended to September 30.

Although the deadline for participating in the survey was September 30, surveys were accepted and included in the final dataset until October 2. A total of 1,378 members participated in the survey (a response rate of 21 percent). Certain respondents were not eligible for the study and were eliminated from the final dataset. These included: 17 respondents who did not work in the United States; 43 respondents who indicated they were either retired, unemployed, or no longer working in the equine medicine industry; 4 respondents who were still attending school at the end of 2021; and 10 respondents who answered fewer than 5 questions before dropping out of the survey. This resulted in a total of 1,284 valid surveys in the final dataset.

The maximum margin of error for the entire sample of 1,284 is ± 2.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. All data in this report are expressed in percentages unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding or when multiple responses were permitted. All percentages that appear in figures and tables are shown rounded to the nearest whole number. All figures and tables exclude “no responses” unless otherwise noted.
Key Findings

All survey results are summarized in this report. However, listed below are the survey highlights.

- Among all those surveyed, the average (mean) salary was $154,217.
- Because 2021 graduates were in veterinary school for half the year, and a number of 2020 graduates were interns for half of 2021 before beginning positions as associates, these cohorts were not included in calculations of average compensation. The mean salary among those respondents who have graduated in recent years (2016-2019 graduates) is $88,973.
- The average number of hours worked during the busiest quarter of 2021 was 57, while an average of 39 hours were worked per week during the least busy quarter of the year.
- When asked how many weeks in 2021 respondents took away from employment for maternity leave, child rearing, or health issues, either paid or unpaid, the average was 1 week.
- With it comes to benefits, CE expenses, AAEP dues, and liability insurance were provided to at least 8 out of 10 respondents and were the most widely provided benefits. Dues for other associations, paid vacation leave, and CE leave were provided to at least 6 out of 10 respondents. Three other benefits were provided to half or more of all respondents: medical insurance, retirement with a company match, and paid sick leave.
- Among all survey respondents, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) have no education-related debt, while another 12 percent owe an amount that is less than their current annual salary. However, when looking at recent graduates (those who graduated in 2016 or later), there is a vastly different picture. More than one-quarter (27 percent) of recent graduates owe an amount that is at least quadruple what they currently earn in a year.
- When given a list of lifestyle-related statements, the positive statements that respondents agreed with most were “I consider the work I do to be rewarding,” and “The benefits I have with my current employer are as good as or better than other similar practices/places of employment.” Negative statements that received the highest level of agreement were “As a practice owner, I expect it will be very difficult to find someone willing and able to purchase my practice/my share of the practice when I’m ready to retire,” and “Our practice has a difficult time locating associates to practice equine medicine.”
- When it comes to expectations with regard to salary and benefits, roughly 6 out of 10 respondents agreed that those expectations had been met or exceeded, with 4 out of 10 disagreeing.
- A clear majority of women respondents who have had one or more pregnancies during their equine career (80 percent) said their employer was accommodating when it came to ensuring their physical safety while pregnant and the same percentage (80 percent) said their employer was accommodating with regard to meeting their needs for maternity leave.
- Overall, more than 8 out of 10 respondents reported being satisfied with their job currently (“very” and “somewhat” combined). Those who have been in equine medicine the longest reported much higher levels of job satisfaction than those who graduated within the past decade, especially those who are the most recent graduates.
• Overall, more than 6 out of 10 respondents reported they would be likely to recommend an equine medicine career (“very” and “somewhat” combined). Much like the job satisfaction question, those who have been in equine medicine the longest reported a much higher likelihood of recommending an equine medicine career than those who graduated within the past decade.

• Among those respondents working in a practice setting, 57 percent of survey respondents are owners (sole or part-owners combined) of the practice in which they work, while 36 percent are associates.

• Overall, of those responding in this survey, there are an average of 6.1 veterinarians working in practices, with 0.6 of those working part-time only. As for non-veterinarians, there is an average of 14.1, with 2.4 of those working only part-time.

• Those working in a practice setting reported working an average of 5.3 days a week during the busiest quarter of the year in 2021 and 4.4 days during the least busy quarter.

• The average amount of personal revenue production among all those working in a practice was $623,377 in 2021.

• Seventy-five percent of respondents who work outside a practice setting work for a college or university, while 10 percent work for the government (federal and state/local combined). Thirteen percent are working for an industry or commercial firm.

• Nearly half of those working outside a practice setting (49 percent) said their primary function is clinical medicine.
Discussion of Survey Findings

Average Salaries of Equine Practitioners

The primary goal of the study was to determine the average annual salary among those working in the equine medicine industry in the United States. Of particular interest was the average salary of those who only recently graduated and began their career in equine medicine. The following table shows that, among all those surveyed, the average (mean) salary was $154,217. The salary among those who have graduated in recent years (2016-2019 graduates) is $88,973. Because 2021 graduates were in veterinary school for half the year, and a number of 2020 graduates were interns for half of 2021 before beginning positions as associates, these cohorts were not included in calculations of average compensation.

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<td>$154,217</td>
<td>$45,115</td>
<td>$62,970</td>
<td>$77,601</td>
<td>$78,805</td>
<td>$91,803</td>
<td>$107,684</td>
<td>$76,581</td>
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<td>$209,275</td>
<td>$177,307</td>
<td>$188,729</td>
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<td>$172,947</td>
<td>$159,613</td>
<td>$143,844</td>
<td>$127,496</td>
<td>$204,727</td>
<td>$115,633</td>
<td>$216,336</td>
<td>$136,300</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sole owner of practice</th>
<th>Multi-owner (private practice)</th>
<th>Multi-owner (corporate practice)</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Intern</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Non-practice: College/University</th>
<th>Non-practice: Government</th>
<th>Non-practice: Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$166,250</td>
<td>$285,733</td>
<td>$231,241</td>
<td>$114,951</td>
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<td>$129,867</td>
<td>$116,038</td>
<td>$126,310</td>
<td>$207,114</td>
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Table 1 (con’t): Equine Medicine Salaries Overall and by Various Subgroups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Very Satisfied with Job</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied with Job</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied with Job</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied with Job</th>
<th>Debt Load: At least triple salary</th>
<th>Debt load: Up to double salary</th>
<th>Debt load: Less than salary</th>
<th>No debt</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>$154,217</td>
<td>$193,175</td>
<td>$131,136</td>
<td>$116,874</td>
<td>$100,556</td>
<td>$69,383</td>
<td>104,486</td>
<td>174,683</td>
<td>$173,995</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>California</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Kentucky</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
<th>New York</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$171,110</td>
<td>$204,406</td>
<td>$180,031</td>
<td>$226,112</td>
<td>$138,654</td>
<td>$125,369</td>
<td>$124,699</td>
<td>$126,402</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed Residency</th>
<th>Completed Internship</th>
<th>Received Board Cert.</th>
<th>Have not done any of these</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$168,670</td>
<td>$143,975</td>
<td>$183,042</td>
<td>$159,215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When considering the difference in salaries between men and women, it is important to note the strong correlation between the year the respondent graduated and gender. Over the past 30 years or so, there has been a significant shift in the equine medicine industry with regard to gender. As the table below depicts, notably more females are entering the equine medicine field today than did 30 years ago. With this correlation in mind, it is understandable why females, as a group, would have a lower salary, given how years of experience has a direct impact on salary.

Because these two demographic markers are so clearly interrelated, throughout this report, references to demographic trends pertaining solely to gender or year graduated must be viewed with this correlation in mind.
Average Number of Hours Worked per Week

Respondents were asked to list the number of regular hours they worked per week in 2021 during both the busiest and least busy quarter of the year. They were told to exclude on-call hours.

As the first table below shows, the average number of hours worked during the busiest quarter was 57, while an average of 39 hours were worked per week during the least busy quarter of the year.

Table 2: Average Number of Hours Worked per Week during Busiest Quarter of the Year by Key Subgroups (excluding on-call hours)

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<td>56</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
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Table 3: Average Number of Hours Worked per Week during the Least Busy Quarter of the Year by Key Subgroups (excluding on-call hours)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
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</table>
Table 3 (con’t): Average Number of Hours Worked per Week during the Least Busy Quarter of the Year by Key Subgroups (excluding on-call hours)

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<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
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When asked how many weeks in 2021 respondents took away from employment for maternity leave, child rearing, or health issues, either paid or unpaid, the average was 1 week.
Benefits Provided to those in the Equine Industry

Respondents were provided a list of 20 benefits that may be provided to employees and were asked which ones they personally received in 2021. If the respondent was self-employed in 2021, they were instructed to indicate which ones they purchased for themselves or their family using practice income. As the following two figures reveal, CE expenses, AAEP dues, and liability insurance were provided to at least 8 out of 10 respondents and were the most widely provided benefits. Dues for other associations, paid vacation leave, and CE leave were provided to at least 6 out of 10 respondents. Three other benefits were provided to half or more of all respondents: medical insurance, retirement with a company match, and paid sick leave. All other benefits were provided to fewer than half of survey respondents, as can be seen in the figures that follow.

![Figure 2: Benefits Provided by Employer](image-url)

*Figure 2: Benefits Provided by Employer (multiple responses allowed; figure 1 of 2)*

- CE expenses: 89%
- AAEP dues: 82%
- Liability insurance: 82%
- Assoc dues (other than AAEP): 69%
- Paid vacation leave: 68%
- CE leave: 60%
- Medical insurance: 58%
- Retirement WITH match: 55%
- Paid sick leave: 51%
- Disability insurance: 42%
A review of demographic markers, found some variances in benefits offered, although none were particularly striking. It is worth noting that those in academia were more likely to receive “traditional” benefits, such as health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, retirement, and paid sick leave and vacation leave when compared to those working in a practice setting. Conversely, CE expenses and leave, as well as association dues (AAEP and others) were more common among those working in a practice setting compared to those in academia.

When asked if they received any other benefits in 2021 beyond the 20 listed, several respondents commented, with the most commonly mentioned “other” benefits being cell phones (provided or a stipend paid) and company vehicles/vehicle expenses. Work clothing was also mentioned with some frequency, as was discounts on services for their own animals. For a complete list of comments, please refer to the data tables that accompany this report.
Debt Load

Pursuing a professional degree is an expensive undertaking and has increased exponentially in recent years, requiring many students to incur debt; sometimes a significant amount. Among all survey respondents, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) have no education-related debt, while another 12 percent owe an amount that is less than their current annual salary. However, when looking at recent graduates (those who graduated in 2016 or later), there is a vastly different picture, as the figure below reveals. More than one-quarter (27 percent) of recent graduates owe an amount that is at least quadruple what they currently earn in a year. Given that the average annual salary of 2016-2021 graduates is just under $77,000 when those cohorts who were finishing school or pursuing an internship in 2020-2021 are included, that equates to a debt of over $300,000 for more than one-fourth of recent graduates.

Figure 4: Debt Load compared to Annual Salary among 2016-2021 Graduates

- 27% No education debt
- 24% Annual income is more than debt owed
- 18% Owe more than earned, but less than double
- 13% Owe at least double amount earned (but less than triple)
- 11% Owe at least triple amount earned (but less than quadruple)
- 7% Owe at least quadruple amount earned
**Lifestyle Agree/Disagree Statements**

All respondents were presented with a series of 18 statements regarding life as an equine practitioner and asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each. If a particular statement did not apply to them, they could note that was the case. The figures that follow summarize the findings from this series of statements and appear in order from the statement with the highest percentage of respondents “strongly agreeing” to the lowest. The figures exclude respondents who said a statement was not applicable, which ranged from 0.1 percent to 67.1 percent. The statements have been abbreviated in the figures; the full text is listed below each figure.
Full text of statements:

- I consider the work I do to be rewarding.
- The benefits I have with my current employer are as good as or better than other similar practices/places of employment.
- As a practice owner, I expect it will be very difficult to find someone willing and able to purchase my practice/my share of the practice when I’m ready to retire.
- Our practice has a difficult time locating associates to practice equine medicine.
- There is a shortage of equine practitioners in my area.
- I feel appreciated at my practice/place of employment for the work I do.
- There is someone in my practice/place of employment who encourages my growth & development.
- Our practice has an equitable on-call plan for its practitioners.
- I enjoy coming to work each day.
Figure 6: Lifestyle Agree/Disagree Statements  
(*excluding those who said “NA”, figure 2 of 2*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delayed having children</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided flexibility to balance work/life</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement plans delayed due to inability to find buyer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a difficult time retaining associates</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family resents amount of time I devote to career</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations in terms of salary &amp; benefits have been met</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often feel overwhelmed by workload</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to own my own practice someday</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an excellent opportunity to own the practice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
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0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Full text of statements:

- As a female, I am delaying/did delay having children because of the potential negative impact it would have on my equine career.
- I am provided flexibility to balance both my professional and personal responsibilities.
- As a practice owner, my retirement plans have been or will likely be delayed due to an inability to find someone to buy my practice.
- Our practice has a difficult time retaining associates to practice equine medicine.
- I think my family resents the amount of time I have to devote to my career.
- My expectations in terms of salary and benefits for a career in equine medicine have been met or exceeded.
- I often feel overwhelmed by the workload I have.
- As a non-practice owner, I would like to own my own practice someday.
- As a non-practice owner, I believe I have an excellent opportunity to become an owner at the practice I’m currently in.
As the previous figures show, the positive statements that respondents agreed with most were “I consider the work I do to be rewarding,” and “The benefits I have with my current employer are as good as or better than other similar practices/places of employment.” Negative statements that received the highest level of agreement were “As a practice owner, I expect it will be very difficult to find someone willing and able to purchase my practice/my share of the practice when I’m ready to retire,” and “Our practice has a difficult time locating associates to practice equine medicine.”

A review of demographic subgroups for this series of questions found some differences of note.

• The longer a respondent has been working, the more likely he or she is to believe they have good benefits. Those who graduated since 2106 are among those most critical of the benefits they receive.

• Younger respondents are much more likely to feel overwhelmed by their current workload. By work setting, those in academia report higher levels of job stress than those working in a practice setting.

• Encouragingly, those who have graduated in the last couple of years are more likely to agree that there is someone at work who is encouraging their growth and development.

• When it comes to professional and personal responsibilities, graduates over the past decade are less likely to believe they are provided the flexibility needed to balance both areas of their lives. Those working in academia are also more likely to feel this way.

• The longer a respondent has been in the industry, the more likely he or she is to report that they enjoy coming to work each day.

• Those who most enjoy coming to work in a practice setting are sole proprietors and those who own a private practice with others. Corporate co-owners and, most especially, associates and interns are not as likely to feel this way.

• The longer one practices, the more likely they are to feel appreciated at work. Many of those who graduated within the past decade don’t feel appreciated for the work they do (nearly one-third).

• Academics are less likely to feel appreciated than those who work in a practice setting.

• Much like the statement regarding the enjoyment of coming to work, those who feel more appreciated in a practice setting are sole proprietors and those who own a private practice with others. Corporate co-owners and, most especially, associates and interns are not as likely to feel appreciated.

• Work is considered to be rewarding by those who have been in the industry the longest. As length of time working decreases, so does the level of reward felt by respondents.

• Among the states with the highest number of respondents, both Californians and New Yorkers report higher concerns about equine practitioner shortages.

• When it comes to whether salary and benefits expectations have been met, new graduates are less likely to say this is the case when compared to those who have been in the industry longer. In fact, among 2016-2021 graduates, more than half disagreed that their expectations have been
met. There is also a strong correlation between how respondents answered this question and the amount of education-related debt they have. Nearly two-thirds of those who owe an amount at least triple their annual salary are disappointed in their salary and benefits package.

- Comparing those in academia to those working in a practice setting, those in academia are less likely to say their salary and benefits expectations have been met.
- Associates and interns are much more likely to say their families resent the amount of time they have to devote to their careers.
- Sole proprietors are much more concerned about finding a buyer for their practices and are more likely to have delayed/will delay retirement as a result than are those who co-own a private practice or are part-owner of a corporate practice.
In addition to the agree/disagree lifestyle statements, female respondents also were asked two specific questions pertaining to maternity leave. The first question asked, “If you have had one or more pregnancies during your equine career, how accommodating was your employer when it came to ensuring your physical safety during your pregnancy (e.g., limiting exposure to activities with inherent risk of injury, altering duties to ones that were less physically strenuous, etc.)?” More than two-thirds of female respondents (67 percent) said they had had no pregnancies during their equine career. Among those who did, 8 out of 10 said their employer was accommodating (“very” and “somewhat” combined) when it came to ensuring their physical safety while pregnant, as the figure below depicts.

**Figure 7: Extent to which Employer was Accommodating to Ensure Physical Safety during Pregnancy**

(among female respondents who have had one or more pregnancies during equine career)

- Very accommodating: 38%
- Somewhat accommodating: 13%
- Not very accommodating: 7%
- Not accommodating at all: 42%
Females who had had one or more pregnancies during their career were also asked how accommodating their employer was when it came to meeting their needs for maternity leave. Once again, 8 out of 10 said their employer was accommodating (“very” and “somewhat” combined) with regard to maternity leave, as the figure below depicts.

**Figure 8: Extent to which Employer was Accommodating to Meeting Needs for Maternity Leave**

*(among female respondents who have had one or more pregnancies during equine career)*

- Very accommodating: 42%
- Somewhat accommodating: 38%
- Not very accommodating: 15%
- Not accommodating at all: 5%
Job Satisfaction & Likelihood of Recommending a Career in Equine Medicine

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their current level of job satisfaction. As the figure below shows, overall, more than 8 out of 10 respondents reported being satisfied (“very” and “somewhat” combined) with their job currently. Those who have been in equine medicine the longest reported much higher levels of job satisfaction than those who graduated within the past decade, especially those who are the most recent graduates.

![Figure 9: Job Satisfaction Overall and by Year Graduated](image)

It may come as no surprise that those who have higher debt loads are more likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction. In fact, among those who are carrying educational debt that is triple or more their current annual salary, nearly 3 out of 10 said they are dissatisfied with their job (“very” and “somewhat” combined).
Respondents who said they are dissatisfied with their job currently were asked to briefly explain why. A review of comments finds a few central themes. Namely, salary expectations are not being met, the amount of hours required (including on-call time), challenging owners/challenging work environment, and difficult clients are all reasons listed by a significant number of respondents.
Survey respondents also were asked to indicate whether they would recommend a career in equine medicine to a friend or family member. As the figure below shows, overall, more than 6 out of 10 respondents reported they would be likely to recommend an equine medicine career (“very” and “somewhat” combined). Much like the job satisfaction question, those who have been in equine medicine the longest reported a much higher likelihood of recommending an equine medicine career than those who graduated within the past decade.

As with job satisfaction, once again it is found that those who have higher debt loads are less likely to recommend a career in equine medicine. In fact, among those who are carrying educational debt that is triple or more their current annual salary, a clear majority (55 percent) would be unlikely to recommend an equine medicine career to a family member or friend.
Respondents who said they are unlikely to recommend a career in equine medicine were asked to briefly explain why. A review of comments finds that many of the central themes found among those who are dissatisfied with their jobs also appear here: long hours and low pay chief among them. There are also frequent mentions of the debt load many new practitioners have to take on in order to practice equine medicine, as well as work-life balance concerns.
What would Help Practitioners Stay in Equine Practice

The last question on the survey asked respondents to complete the following sentence: “The single most important thing that would help me stay in equine practice would be….” A full list of comments can be found in the data tables that accompany this report. Listed below, however, is a sample of the comments provided. (Note that all comments appear as they were entered by the respondent and may include grammatical or typographical errors.)

• More flexibility in my daily schedule
• Decreased on-call time
• To be paid more and work less with clients that view us as actual health care professionals versus glorified plumbers or service industry members.
• An enhancement to my retirement by staying longer.
• No on call
• The financial ability to hire adequate help.
• Ether life balance with an additional associate that I could mentor and incrementally encourage to buy into the practice
• Being younger. I retired January 1, 2022 at the age of 69. The 2nd most important thing would be being paid more/ feeling that I am being compensated for what I am/was worth.
• Boundaries for clients and teaching them to respect my time.
• To have associates stay working for the practice long term
• Better work life balance so I can enjoy my family more
• Creating a “sub specialty” practice, i.e. dentistry or lameness or ? that brings clients to me and allows me to control my time and lifestyle. Working hand in hand with my spouse has also been tremendously valuable and I strongly encourage others to do so.
• Shorter, more predictable hours. Support that I could trust that would allow me to step away from work without feeling guilty. No after hours/weekend work now that I have reached a level of seniority. Appreciation for the work that I do.
• I will never do anything but equine practice, I’m not leaving. We need to do a better job of selecting Veterinary student candidates so the people who will stay in the profession are admitted
• Great connections with clients, horses and the people I work with everyday, along with sustainable work-life balance. After 20 years in the veterinary field, I finally feel very comfortable with the amount of time I am willing and able to work and my style of practice and how that can work for me and my happiness.

• Better networking between other solo practices. And possible sharing of resources to create greater flexibility for work/life balance that would also encourage new veterinarians to join and build rural practices.

• Taking less after-hours call.

• my longevity

• Time off for travel

• Focus on positive.. too much negative in this world. Give as much or more voice to young and old veterinarians that are successful and teach young vets to not take conflicts / rude client’s comments personally.

• I have no workable choice, but I like it

• Find a good associate vet.

• Hope for the future. Right now, it is hard to see that what I’m doing will matter because there will be few to no people to replace me. It is difficult to know how or when to stop, especially if there is no one to replace you in the future.

• Work/life balance, which we (myself & my husband/partner) are committed to doing. Although there is a lot of sacrifice, client loss, stress, etc. But we are admit that we do not live to work. And instead work to live. I went through an internship & surgical residency where I lived to work. If I continued on that path, I believe my happiness as a veterinarian would be long gone. But I am in a "privilege " situation (that I had to work hard for / make sacrifices) now as a business owner that I do what I want to do when I want to do it. But I have to live with the consequences of losing clients, therefore income, etc - but there has to be a work-life balance. Keep in mind from my previous answers that I did not have children so that does still further show my earlier devotion/ "sacrifice" for my career in my earlier years.

• Better time management from the practice owners

• Continue to be compensated well. have enough people to cover for me when i want to take some time off

• Less on call

• Better work-life balance and increased salary.

• Better compensation

• Improved salary/ benefits to allow my income to debt ratio to improve and overall improve my standard of living and savings.

• Less on call
More encouragement and support from older generations of veterinarians who "had to walk uphill in the snow both ways." Instead of making life more difficult for those trying to enter equine practice, finding ways to fix the things that made it difficult in the past rather than perpetuating the cruelty and hazing that new practitioners face. More regulation of internships to ensure that internships/residencies aren’t analogous to "indentured servitude" (YES, I had a very well known practice owner tell me that’s what internships are and should be while I was visiting his practice). Also, less back stabbing, throwing under the bus etc. of other equine practitioners. The equine industry is rife with people you need to watch your back around - other equine vets shouldn’t be included in that list! We should be working together, learning from each other, and encouraging those around us rather than tearing them down. Unfortunately, that doesn’t really happen. The issues with equine practice are far less about the finances (although that is a problem) and far more about the brutality with which we treat our own egos and inflate our self worth. The AAEP has done little to recognize and stop this in any real way - internship regulation would be a start.

To create a male/female balance in veterinary school admission 90+%female graduating classes is not sustainable for our profession. I am a lifelong Equine Veterinarian in practice for 45 years, my wife is an Equine Veterinarian, our youngest son is an Equine Veterinarian, our other son works in the business as VP of operations. We love what we do but we also appreciate and respect gender balance.

Finding an associate that can deliver the level of equine practice that my clients enjoy today

Higher pay.

A larger salary and/or my academic institution allowing us to hire another veterinarian for our practice so that we can better balance our clinical responsibilities with our teaching responsibilities and/or having a 4 day work week.

Better financial security.

Higher salary, more days off

Having a community of all the Colleagues in the area to help take emergencies for everyone in a rotating way.

To not get hurt!

Reduced emergency/on call time.

More income or debt forgiveness

An additional associate (that would make us a 4 vet practice) so that I can cut back on taking calls and work a 4 day week all year long instead of just in the slow season.

Having an associate AND being able to afford to pay them!!

Single most important thing?! That’s hard!! More compensation for the work I provide outside of “regular hours”. Aka if I’m answering phone calls and discussing things with clients outside of work hours, I would love for my salary to reflect that time spent.
• More vacation time that can be used guilt-free.

• Better compensation

• My own personal health maintaining or improving, having nothing to do with the industry.

• I own my own practice and have for twenty-three years, so my answer is from that prospective. I set boundary lines many years ago so that I would be able to enjoy my family time. Clients didn’t like it at first, but they got "trained" to know that if it was a true emergency and they were a current client I would take care of them. I haven’t taken new clients on an emergency basis for 15 years, this was the single most thing that kept me in equine practice. My first job had zero thoughts to working me 60-70 hours a week and zero thoughts to work/life balance. Die on the battle field was the owners attitude. I made a decision...I would own my own practice and I would not treat my doctors like that. I have stuck by that and we have a very flexible system and it works. I had received very little mentorship at my first job as well, and again I decided that was not how I would run my practice. There are so many variables to keeping associates: salary, emergency calls and fees, technicians, benefits, and clinic culture are the big ones. The biggest one from what my associates tell me is how they are treated by the owner and the clients. A supportive, inclusive, flexible clinic is a happy clinic. Mentorship is huge with young veterinarians and I make myself available for that. It is never a bother to have them call me or text me a question. We will all need to work together to alleviate this crisis that has been brewing for many years.

• Being on call no more than 25% of the time.

• I have loved and still love this career. The ability to form life long relationships with clients and trainers makes my job fairly stress free. As a practice owner I am excited to try to help solve the issues that are facing our industry. Number one goal is to counter the affect of many that teach students that have strong negativity to our industry, but have never experienced it to make those statements. There are plenty of people out there that enjoy the job. We just need to be a bit more vocal.

• Developing a call sharing program between other local equine veterinarians.

• Love equine medicine! I have worked to allow a schedule for mixed animal vets that can work 4 days a week, 1 sat a month, and 1 weekend ER a month.... it helps for sure!

• Unify national practice standards like an AAHA accreditation for horse vets. No more wing nut horse vets dragging down the standard of conduct.

• Feeling appreciated, distribution of on-call more equally (not enough associates to do so), increased pay.
• To become up-to-date with pay, on-call schedules and time off that small animal practitioners are being offered. It is much easier for students to go into small animal medicine, work a better schedule, be compensated more appropriately and then own/enjoy horses in a non-professional manner than to go into equine medicine

• 9-5 M-F

• Knowing I will have someone to sell my practice to when I am ready to retire.

• Continuing to do what I love. I won’t leave before retirement. I did practice melon or medicine for three years while I was pregnant and having children, and I will not go back to it. I found a way to practice and is fine with a holistic on the practice which means no emergencies and no overhead. I can be a man to my children and still enjoy my medicine.

• As a single practitioner there is not much choice on after hours work. Having evenings off is a big plus.

• ... the ability to hire an associate

• Better work/life balance, more respect from clientele and colleagues, on call sharing between colleagues in my area, better pay.

• Having other equine veterinarians in my area more willing to give on call assistance when I want to get away for continuing education or vacations

• Good appreciative clients and no on call.

• Higher salary

• Another vet of my knowledge base to help during breeding season. I work 7 days a week and breed over 60 mares by myself with 1/3 of them being frozen semen.

• If clients could all remember how to be civil human beings.

• Support from practice owner. Whole hearted, I got your back, I want to help you be the vet you want to be, and treat our practice like a family.

• I broke off from a group practice and am now a sole practitioner. That has improved my financial situation and my job satisfaction tremendously. Rotating calls with another Veterinary Clinic has helped me stay in equine practice.

• More appreciation from the general public/clients regarding expectations of veterinarians. There is a huge disconnect in what people think we do to how hard we actually work to provide outstanding services to our practice area and community.

• Having more time to devote to research.

• Having a good work-life balance that allows me to maintain mental & physical health and pursue other interests outside of the field.

• Having more free time to spend doing the things I like to do outside of veterinary medicine, and having the financial security that would allow me to do that.

• Younger body, my knees and shoulders are making work more difficult.
• Salary comparable to small animal veterinarian counterparts and no on call work or LARGE compensation for being on call.

• Recognition that a reasonable work-life balance should be acceptable and not frowned upon.

• A better quality of work-life balance.

• The ability to equate the mental and physical stress levels combined with education debt payments to salary.

• Less hours

• Continuing to share the on call burden with my associates in the area. Together we can help the equine community but maintain a good quality of life. We should not view other practices as competitors but come together as a united front to serve our community.

• I already did it - I left the employer I worked for in 2021 and started a new job in academia in 2022. My salary increased from 73000 to 103000, and I have increased flexibility and time off, and less on call. It's a much better, more sustainable job.

• Better work conditions

• For my physical health to hold up. I have absolutely NO intention to leave equine medicine unless I become physically unable to perform my job.

• Increased salary

• 4 day work week and less on call

• I love my job and my situation, I had amazing mentoring by the senior veterinarian.

• Having a less time demanding schedule.

• Practice ownership (which is what I'm doing).

• My physical well being taking into consideration my age!

• Better compensation

• a practice that has multiple doctors to split on call/emergency work more evenly, as well as better compensation

• Minimal amount of on-call time with little to no weekend work.

• A sustainable schedule both for appointments during work and for work-life balance out of work and a salary that meets my financial needs for basic living, student loans and personal uses so that I can have something outside of just work

• A flexible work schedule to allow me to enjoy activities outside of work.

• More support staff (technicians)

• Engagement with clients and horse owners.

• Less hours!

• It's too late. I already left.
About Those Working in a Practice Setting

A series of questions was asked of respondents who indicated they worked in a veterinary practice. As the figure below indicates, 57 percent of survey respondents are owners (sole or part-owners combined) of the practice in which they work, while 36 percent are associates.

Figure 11: Employment Status Among those Working in a Practice Setting

- Sole proprietor: 39%
- Multi-owner (private): 4%
- Multi-owner (corporate): 4%
- Associate: 15%
- Intern: 3%
- Other: 36%
Next, they were asked to share the number of veterinarians and non-veterinarians working in the practice in which they were employed. Overall, there are an average of 6.1 veterinarians working in respondents' practices, with 0.6 of those working part-time only. As for non-veterinarian staff, there is an average of 14.1 of them, with 2.4 of those working only part-time. The table below lists the number of veterinarians and non-veterinarians working in various types of practices.

**Table 4: Average Number of Full- and Part-time Veterinarians and Non-Veterinarians Employed by Type of Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Vets (PT &amp; FT)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Vets (PT only)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Non-Vets (PT &amp; FT)</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Non-Vets (PT only)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those working in practices also were asked to indicate what percentage of their time is devoted to different types of work, including non-equine work.

Table 5: Average Percentage of Practice Devoted to Each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Show/Performance</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: General Practice</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Reproduction</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Emergency</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Referral Surgical/Medical</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Work/Ranch</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Racetrack</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine: Regulatory</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-equine large animal</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small animal</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practitioners reported working an average of 5.3 days a week during the busiest quarter of the year in 2021 and 4.4 during the least busy quarter.

Table 6: Average Number of Days Worked in 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Average Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the most busy quarter of the year</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the least busy quarter of the year</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practitioners reported working an average of 104 on-call weeknights and 22 on-call weekends in 2021. With an average of 6.1 veterinarians per practice (See Table 4.) this suggests that on-call responsibilities are not distributed equitably.

**Table 7: Average Number of On-Call Weeknights & Weekends in 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Average Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-call weeknights</td>
<td>104 nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call weekends</td>
<td>22 weekends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average amount of personal revenue production among all those working in a practice was $623,377 in 2021, as the table below reveals. Also listed are personal revenue production figures within key subgroups.

**Table 8: Personal Revenue Production Overall and by Key Subgroups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$623,377</td>
<td>$131,900</td>
<td>$284,071</td>
<td>$338,043</td>
<td>$410,653</td>
<td>$521,063</td>
<td>$464,444</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$357,836</td>
<td>$569,987</td>
<td>$616,787</td>
<td>$640,656</td>
<td>$797,915</td>
<td>$687,937</td>
<td>$897,177</td>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$583,056</td>
<td>$651,849</td>
<td>$868,283</td>
<td>$388,260</td>
<td>$731,412</td>
<td>$640,117</td>
<td>$880,540</td>
<td>$681,942</td>
<td>$527,096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those working in a practice setting also were asked how much additional compensation they earned from seeing emergencies, if any. Three percent of respondents said the question did not apply, as they did not see emergencies at all. Of the remaining respondents, nearly half (42 percent) said they received no additional compensation, while nearly one-third (32 percent) said they receive 100 percent of the fees paid for emergency care they provide, as the figure below shows.

Figure 12: Amount of Additional Compensation Earned from Seeing Emergencies

- 42% received 100% of emergency fees
- 32% received 76-99% of emergency fees
- 6% received 51-75% of emergency fees
- 5% received 26-50% of emergency fees
- 4% received 25% or less of emergency fees
- 1% received some other fee/arrangement
- 1% received none

Associates are among those most likely to be earning additional income from seeing emergencies (only 25 percent said they did not receive any extra compensation).
About Those Working in a Non-Practice Setting

A series of questions was asked of respondents who indicated they worked in a non-veterinary-practice setting. As the figure below indicates, 75 percent of respondents who work outside a practice setting work for a college or university, while 10 percent work for the government (federal and state/local combined). Thirteen percent are working for an industry or commercial firm.

Figure 13: Employer Type Among those Working in a Non-Practice Setting

- 75% College/University
- 13% Federal Government
- 7% State or Local Government
- 3% Industry or Commercial Firm
- 2% Other
Asked to identify their position, nearly half indicated they are a professor. Only a small number of other job titles were selected by at least 5 percent of respondents and are listed in the figure below.

**Figure 14: Position Among those Working in a Non-Practice Setting**
*(responses listed by at least 5% of respondents)*

- Full Professor: 29%
- Associate Professor: 15%
- Assistant Professor: 14%
- Clinician: 5%
- Resident: 5%
- Researcher: 8%
- Program Leader/Coordinator/Section Head: 7%
Finally, those working outside a practice setting were asked to identify their primary job function. As the figure below shows, nearly half work in clinical medicine. All other functions were chosen by a much smaller percentage of respondents.

**Figure 15: Primary Function Among those Working in a Non-Practice Setting**
(responses listed by at least 5% of respondents)

- Clinical medicine: 49%
- Mgmt/Admin: 6%
- Research: 11%
- Teaching: 10%
- Tech/Sales support: 10%
- Regulatory: 7%
- All others combined: 5%
Other Demographics

The following tables summarize the demographic questions included in the survey.

Table 9: Year Graduated from Veterinary Medical School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1976</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1985</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1995</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2005</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2010</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2021</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: State in which Practice/Employer is Located (states mentioned by at least 3% of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 11: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12: Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13: Children in the Home (*multiple responses allowed*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children by Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children age 6 or younger</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children age 7-12</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children age 13-17</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None minor children in the home</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>