



# Economic Impact Study of the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph

## Executive Summary

July 9, 2014



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The Ontario Veterinary College (“the OVC” or “the College”) is a hub for veterinary medicine in Ontario, and is engaged across all aspects of the food animal, companion animal, equine and public health sectors through its students, faculty and graduates. The impact it exerts is the result of the supply of highly trained veterinarians it graduates, the output and dissemination of relevant new research to continually assist industry, and the provision of clinical expertise and education to veterinarians and the public.

The OVC supports, through its research, faculty and graduates, industries that generate an estimated \$20 billion annually and directly contributes more than \$125 million to Ontario’s economy. As the only veterinary college in Ontario and one of only five in Canada, the OVC graduates almost one-third of all Canadian-educated veterinarians and the majority of these veterinarians stay in Ontario. Many of them establish private businesses that are estimated in this study to produce an annual economic impact of approximately \$1.3 billion in Ontario

Without the OVC it is doubtful that societal needs for veterinary services in the Province could be met. This is due to a number of factors including the limited capacity to educate veterinarians in Canada and the high employment levels for veterinarians.

In addition to training veterinarians, OVC plays a critical role developing and disseminating new research to industry and is a vital link in the public health community ensuring health issues are tackled from both a human and animal perspective.

The findings below outline the importance of the OVC to Ontario by highlighting not only the OVC’s direct economic contributions but also its key role in supporting the various industries in which veterinary medicine interacts.

## Local Economic Impact of OVC Operations

Based upon the direct spending that is undertaken by OVC, the College creates economic activity exceeding \$125 million per year and is responsible for creating more than \$43.6 million in total employment income and 800 jobs in Ontario.

In 2013-2014, the College’s total revenue was \$63.4 million, of which only \$34.4 million of which was from government-provided operating grants. This leveraging of government funding from other revenue sources contributes significantly to the total economic impact of the College on the Province.

## Additional Economic Impact

### Clinical Practice of Veterinary Medicine in Ontario

The College produces the majority of veterinarians in the Province and these graduates contribute significantly to the Province’s economy. A significant portion of veterinarians operate practices, which are small businesses and have their own economic impacts. We estimated that the economic impacts associated with these practices are approximately \$1.3 billion per year while supporting more than 7,000 jobs annually in Ontario.

### Veterinary Support of Critical Food Production Industries

The food animal production industry sees about \$5 billion in farm receipts and contributes an estimated \$20 billion to the provincial economy. Veterinarians play a significant role in the food animal production sector by ensuring it is meeting regulatory standards, safeguarding against losses from disease, ensuring the production of safe food and providing essential veterinarian services.

## Impact of Health Management Activities & Research and Innovation by OVC

The following highlights the impact of the health management activities as well as the research and innovation at OVC.

## **Food Animal Health Management**

Food animal veterinarians in clinical practice, industry and government in Ontario are responsible for the health of more than 218 million dairy cows, swine and poultry and the industry contributes approximately \$20 billion in economic activity to the provincial economy on an annual basis. The OVC, as one of the largest and most well respected programs of its kind in the world, is an essential link in the development and maintenance of health management standards and protocols in an ever-evolving scientific landscape. Furthermore, the continued efforts and reputation of OVC and its practicing graduates in Ontario act to reassure the public that their food will continue to be safe.

## **Public Health and Zoonoses**

The continuum that exists between animal and human health is of major importance to the health and safety of Ontario's inhabitants, both human and animal, and it is essential that issues be tackled from both the human perspective and the animal perspective. The OVC plays a key role in helping local, provincial and federal public health organizations protect human health through investigation of zoonotic pathogens and the diseases they cause, research into the prevention and control of those diseases, and development and implementation of management techniques to prevent outbreaks. By close collaboration with the public health sector and government agencies, OVC plays a critical role in keeping the people and animals of Ontario healthy.

## **Translational Medicine**

Translational medicine improves the health of individuals by "translating" or building on findings from naturally occurring disease in animals to develop new therapies or medical procedures in people. The College has capitalized on its position as a provincial and national hub for disease prevention, complex care and disease research, to make significant contributions to translational medicine benefitting both human and animal health. The OVC has a catchment area of several million people and their animals providing an excellent opportunity to advance discovery through studies and clinical trials into diseases common to both people and animals. By investigating naturally-occurring diseases in animals, researchers at the OVC, and its partner organizations, can assess diagnostic and therapeutic options that may be applicable to the same disease in people.

## **Short and Long-Term Veterinary Medicine Needs**

There is almost no unemployment for veterinarians and a recent government of Canada outlook for the profession shows a projected growth in demand for veterinarians in the future<sup>1</sup>. Add to this the fact that the scope of services provided by veterinary medicine is continually expanding, with more veterinarians providing their expertise to the public health field and other areas, and it becomes clear that the importance of veterinary medicine in Ontario and across Canada will continue to grow in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/3114.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/3114.shtml)

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