

# Building Sustainable Veterinary Education and Outreach Programmes to Strengthen International Capacity and Competency Standards for Veterinary Paraprofessionals and Professionals



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## Abstract

In a rapidly changing world, veterinary education must expand and adapt to meet societal demands in the fields of animal health, animal welfare, and veterinary public health. The World Organisation for Animal Health Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS) evaluation reports have highlighted the need for improved veterinary education to support successful Veterinary Services. The most effective way to protect against ongoing global animal health threats is to build sustainable capacity by strengthening and fostering veterinary educational programmes. The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD) is recognized as an OIE Collaborating Centre for biological threat reduction, and manages a portfolio that includes international veterinary education programmes that improve animal health worldwide through technical training and certification. Many OIE Member Countries rely on veterinary paraprofessionals to perform routine surveillance, and laboratory duties, while also forming a crucial link between animal caretakers and veterinarians. Currently, IIAD administers the Veterinary Science Certificate Program (VSCP) to over 30,000 youth in the United States. This paraprofessional certification program provides the training and skills needed for certified veterinary assistants in core areas of animal care, veterinary science, laboratory science, diagnostic processes, and public health. IIAD has provided professional training in 15 nations globally related to laboratory, epidemiology, and surveillance measures. These are offered online or as in-country training programs. All IIAD programs are in synergistic alignment with international standards (i.e., OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code) and the PVS Pathway, which is dedicated to the sustainable improvement of the quality of Veterinary Services in OIE Member Countries. Pending availability of funding, the OIE and IIAD are exploring opportunities to develop standardised minimum competencies and minimum curricular requirements for veterinary paraprofessionals in alignment with the OIE intergovernmental standards, guidelines, and recommendations.

## Introduction

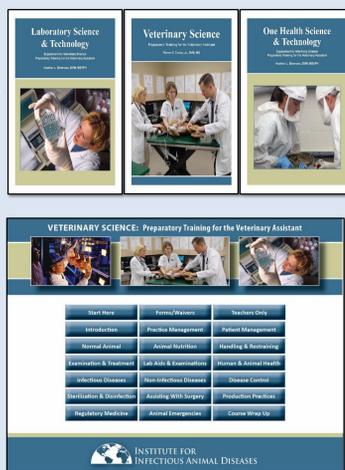
The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD), a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence, performs research and training to promote and enhance global animal, public, and ecosystem health by providing innovative, sustainable, inter-disciplinary solutions addressing complex global challenges. IIAD has delivered in-country and U.S.-based trainings, engaged ministerial leadership, and hosted scientific/knowledge exchange workshops to build capacity in veterinary epidemiology, diagnostics, laboratory information management, and biosafety /biosecurity for trainees from five continents.



## Activities

### Paraprofessional Training & Certification Programs

- Transcends the secondary thru higher education pipeline and trains laboratory technicians, public health technicians, and clinical paraprofessionals.
- Currently provides a certification and continuing education pathway with the title of a certified veterinary assistant and enrolls over 30,000 students annually in the United States.
- Available on multiple platforms (e.g., online, face-to-face, independent learning, electronic publication).
- A 6-year proven program framework which is adaptable to provide a foundation to develop a standardized model for determining competency levels at the paraprofessional level.



### Professional Training Programs

- Provides training to veterinary, diagnostic, public health, and research professionals through three independent programs.
  - International Epidemiology & Surveillance Training Program
  - International Laboratory Training Program
  - Scientific Business Development & Management Program
- Five short courses developed.
- Trained 208 personnel in 15 countries.
- Programs leverage OIE Collaborating Centres, FAO, and the international community.



## Conclusions



- IIAD develops customized education and training programs that:
  - Develop a certified skilled workforce (i.e., paraprofessional – laboratory technicians and public health technicians);
  - Elevate global health as a priority;
  - Build capacity at the human-animal nexus;
  - Target all educational levels and training needs; and
  - Provide scientific enrichment, blended learning techniques, and evaluation methodologies for measuring programmatic outcomes and impacts.