

## Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

# Distribution of Ross and St. George's Universities Veterinary Graduates in the United States

By Dr. Donald F. Smith\*

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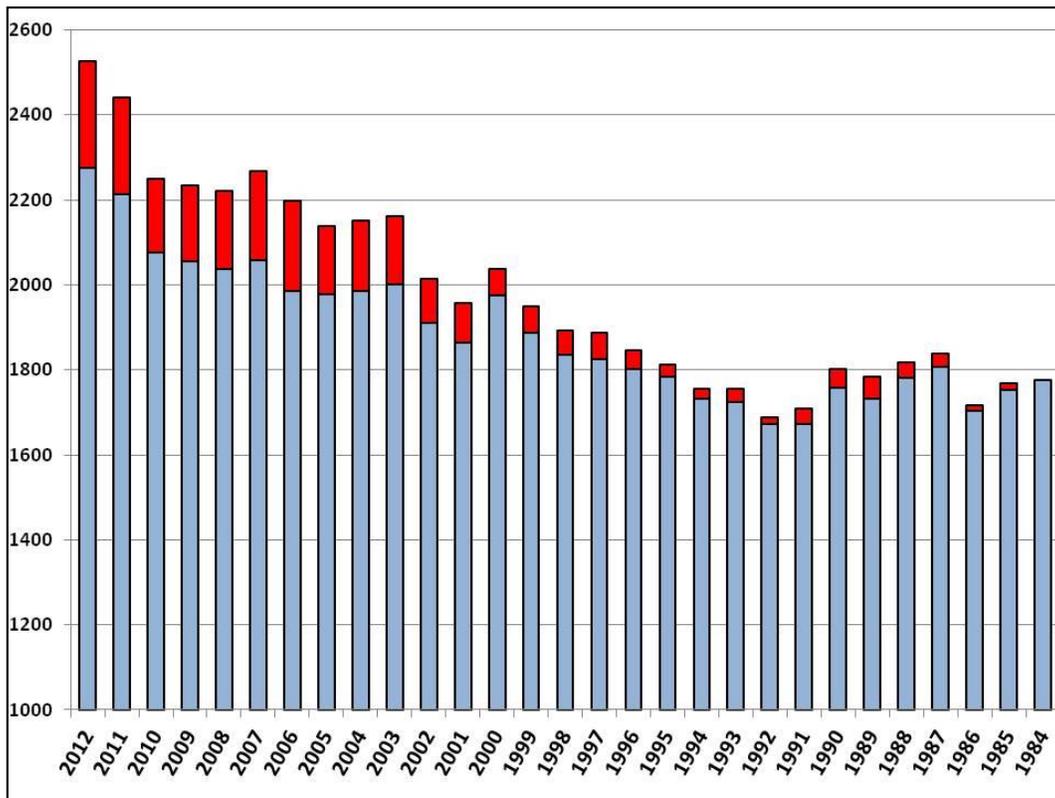
Caribbean veterinary schools have received greater interest in recent years because of increased enrollment and their accreditation, in 2011, by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Some perceive that their graduates, who mostly work in the United States—and indeed, all graduates—are facing challenging times because of the slow economic recovery and the increased enrollment of veterinary students in US colleges. Anticipation of the impact of two new colleges projected to matriculate their first classes in fall 2014<sup>1</sup> has increased the AVMA's concern about under-utilization of capacity.<sup>2</sup>

Others, like Dr. Jeff Klausner of Banfield Pet Hospitals, feel that we do not have too many veterinarians graduating but rather a population of pets receiving too infrequent veterinary care, or none at all.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Clint Lewis of Zoetis agrees, though he broadens the discussion to include professional opportunities outside of traditional veterinary medicine, citing veterinarians' potential to provide expertise in new fields of medicine, commerce and education.<sup>4</sup> I would add the enormous potential veterinarians have to enhance human health by developing the nascent field described as zoeyia by Dr. Kate Hodgson.<sup>5</sup>

Ross University's School of Veterinary Medicine on the island of St. Kitts graduated its first class in 1985; St. George's University on Grenada followed in 2003. The following chart shows the current number of AVMA-member veterinarians who graduated from US veterinary programs and these two Caribbean schools during this period. Though less than five percent of AVMA members who graduated in the last 30 years are from Ross University and St. George's University, that number is projected to grow as their class sizes have increased in the last few years.

Many graduates of the Caribbean schools reside in heavily-populated states, especially California, Texas, New York and Florida, though their distribution is otherwise skewed towards the Northeast. New York has always had the greatest number of Caribbean graduates in years.

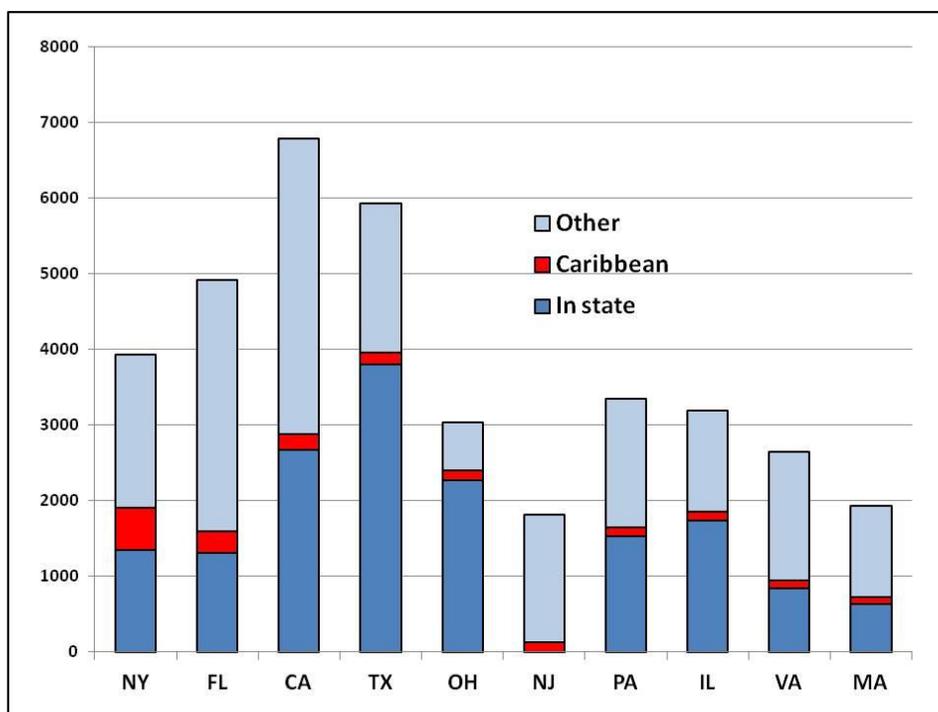
The following graph profiles the ten states with the greatest number of Ross and St. George's graduates, relative to the number of graduates of the in-state colleges and the number of graduates of other US colleges.



*Number of AVMA-Member Veterinarians who Graduated from US Colleges (Blue) and from Ross and St. George's Universities (Red) 1984-2012. <sup>6</sup>*

The graph below shows that in all of these states, but especially the large ones like New York which have traditionally recruited substantial numbers of veterinary graduates from other states, the Caribbean graduates fill only a small portion of positions. New Jersey has had contracts with other colleges for in-state tuition, so it is not entirely accurate to show it without “in-state” students. However, the number of contracts has decreased in recent years and it remains the most populous state in the country without a veterinary college.

Though it is hard to anticipate the demographic profile of the Caribbean schools in future years, I predict that their recent attainment of AVMA accreditation will encourage greater enrollment of residents from the populous states of California, Texas, Florida and possibly Illinois and New Jersey. The impact of the two new colleges, especially Midwestern University in Arizona, may be a confounding variable in this prediction.



*Number of Graduates from the In-State University (dark blue), Ross and St. George's Universities (red) and Other US Colleges (light blue) for the Ten States with the most Ross and St. George's Graduates.<sup>7</sup>*

\*Dr. Smith is a member of the Ross University Board of Trustees that is responsible for overseeing the Ross University School of Medicine and the Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine, both members of the DeVry Inc. family of institutions.

<sup>1</sup> Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona, and Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee.

<sup>2</sup> [2013 Veterinary Workforce Study: Modeling Capacity Utilization](#). Final Report for the American Veterinary Medical Association, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Klausner, Jeffrey S. (Senior VP and Chief Medical Officer, Banfield Pet Hospital), lecture at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, August 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, Clinton (Executive VP and President, US Operations, Zoetis), 2013 Commencement Address for Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine, New York, NY, June 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Donald F. One Health Comes of Age. *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine*. June 23, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> [AVMA Member Directory](#) (Restricted Access), August 2013.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

**KEYWORDS:**

History of Veterinary Medicine

Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine

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St. George University School of Veterinary Medicine  
Private University  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Midwestern University  
Lincoln Memorial University  
Council on Education  
Accreditation

TOPICS:

Veterinary Colleges in the United States  
Veterinary Colleges, International

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

*Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.