



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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WSDA names new state veterinarian

OLYMPIA – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) has selected a veterinarian with almost 40 years experience in veterinary medicine as the new state veterinarian.

Dr. Joe Baker, who is married and has two grown sons, has held positions with the New Mexico Livestock Board since 2006. He has headed New Mexico's Food Safety, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division, worked as a field veterinarian and served for a time as interim state veterinarian. He completed his bachelor's and doctorate degrees in veterinary medicine at Washington State University and also completed an equine reproduction residency at the University of California at Davis.

Dr. Baker will start with WSDA on Nov. 3.

"Dr. Baker comes to us with the experience and background to be a great state veterinarian," WSDA Director Bud Hover said. "He has many years in private practice but also has a deep understanding of regulatory medicine and policy, both of which will help him work successfully with the livestock industry."

Dr. Paul Kohrs has been Washington's acting state veterinarian.

"While performing as acting state veterinarian, Paul and his staff went through some trying times, including the mudslide disaster in Snohomish County and a bovine tuberculosis quarantine case in 2013," Hover said. "I am glad that Paul will remain with us and continue to share his expertise."

As the new state veterinarian, Baker will manage WSDA's [Animal Health](#) Program, working with field veterinarians. The broad goals of the program are to protect and enhance animal health and animal well being, promote the economic vitality of the livestock industry, and safeguard Washington residents by identifying and limiting exposure to zoonotic diseases that could affect humans.

Washington's livestock industry is a major component of the state's diverse agriculture. Milk is Washington's third ranking agricultural commodity and cattle and calves rank sixth. Combined, the two sectors' value exceeds \$1.7 billion. In addition, Washington's poultry industry generates more than \$150 million, counting fryers and egg layers.

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