

No. 1992-64

## AN ACT

HB 1313

Providing for Commonwealth support for the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program for Pennsylvania residents who graduate from institutions of higher education and who apply their degrees in agriculture to family farms within this Commonwealth.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Agency.” The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

“Agricultural products.” Crops, livestock and livestock products, and commodities, including, but not limited to:

(1) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.

(2) Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.

(3) Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets, onions and mushrooms.

(4) Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.

(5) Cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, furbearing animals, milk, eggs and furs.

(6) Timber, wood and other wood products derived from trees.

(7) Aquatic plants and animals and their by-products.

(8) Products derived from any of the above and other products derived from the business of farming, including such other products as may be manufactured, derived or prepared from the heretofore mentioned products, raw or processed, which are used as food for man or animals.

“Family farm.” The real property of a farm owned by members of an immediate family or by a family farm corporation used for the production, for commercial purposes, of agricultural products.

“Family farm corporation.” A corporation of which at least 75% of its assets are devoted to the business of agriculture and at least 75% of each class of stock of the corporation is continuously owned by members of the immediate family.

“Immediate family member.” A spouse, child, stepchild, parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister or like relative-in-law of an owner of real property.

“Mixed practice of veterinary medicine.” As described by the American Veterinary Medical Association, that type of clinical veterinary practice or consultation which deals with more than one categorical species, including, but not limited to, agricultural animals.

“Practice of veterinary medicine.” The practice in the field of veterinary medicine by any person qualified by educational training and experience in the science and techniques of veterinary medicine and who is currently licensed to practice veterinary medicine by the Pennsylvania State Board of Veterinary Medicine under the act of December 27, 1974 (P.L.995, No.326), known as the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

“Qualified applicant.” A resident of this Commonwealth who meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Holds a degree in a field related to the production of agricultural products or in the field of veterinary medicine, from an institution of higher education located within this Commonwealth, approved by the agency for participation under this act.

(2) Is in the first year of full-time employment or work on a family farm or in the practice of veterinary medicine, a portion of which activity must be for the protection and enhancement of agricultural animal health and productivity, on or after July 1, 1991.

(3) Has borrowed through the agency-administered Guaranteed Student Loan Programs.

“U.S.D.A. certification.” Certification by the United States Department of Agriculture that a graduate veterinarian has successfully passed an examination and is certified to sign health certificates allowing the interstate commerce of agricultural animals and animal products as well as the ability to certify regulatory testing such as bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis.

“Veterinary medicine.” That branch of medicine which deals with the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, administration, prescription, operation or manipulation or application of any apparatus or appliance for any disease, pain, deformity, defect, injury, wound or physical condition of any animal or for the prevention of or the testing for the presence of any disease.

### Section 3. Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program.

Qualified applicants who are selected for the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program, in accordance with this act, shall be eligible for payment by the agency of a portion of the debt incurred by the applicant through the agency-administered Guaranteed Student Loan Programs for the education necessary to receive a degree in an agriculturally related field. For each year that the applicant is employed full time on a family farm or works full time on a family farm, a portion of which must be located within this Commonwealth, or is engaged in the mixed practice of veterinary medicine within this Commonwealth, a portion of which activity must be for the protection and enhancement of agricultural animal health and productivity, and who has obtained U.S.D.A. certification, the agency shall forgive a proportional part of the applicant's loan. No more than \$2,000 shall be forgiven in any year, and no more than \$10,000 shall be forgiven for any applicant. Payments shall be made in accordance with the procedures established by the agency.

**Section 4. Loan forgiveness awards.**

Recipients of the loan forgiveness awards shall be those applicants who are approved by the agency. Each applicant shall be required to submit such documentation of continued eligibility as the agency may require. The required content of this documentation shall be developed by the agency in consultation with the Department of Agriculture.

**Section 5. Funding.**

Loan forgiveness awards shall be made to the extent that funds are appropriated by the General Assembly.

**Section 6. Responsibility of agency.**

It shall be the responsibility of the agency to administer the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program established by this act and to adopt such regulations, policies, procedures and forms as are necessary and not inconsistent with the provisions of this act.

**Section 7. Expiration.**

This act shall expire July 1, 1993.

**Section 8. Effective date.**

This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 26th day of June, A. D. 1992.

ROBERT P. CASEY