

Overview

The Department of Labor's (DOL) Occupational Outlook Handbook (handbook), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), provides a variety of occupational statistics, as well as job descriptions, work environment, pay bands, and other related employment data. The State Department staff in Mexico is focused on streamlining and standardizing the TN application process by referring heavily to the handbook when conducting TN interviews.

Applicants should be prepared to answer questions about the work they are, or will be, doing that aligns with DOL's job description for visa purposes. The job offer letter and application packet should also adhere to these descriptions.

The most used TN visa categories for the pork industry include animal breeder (agricultural worker), agriculturist/agronomist, and veterinarian.

Consider that the DOL handbook categories are broad and have more detailed descriptions for specific positions. The broad category duties may not apply to the specific TN visa position, while the specific duties will apply.

Animal Breeder (Agricultural Workers)

Found under the handbook's listing for agricultural worker, the animal breeder category description is "maintain crops and tend livestock."

The pay band is \$28,450 to \$45,200 with the median salary of \$33,290 in 2022. The median salary for animal breeders specifically was \$45,320 in 2022.

According to the handbook, an animal breeder's category-wide duties include:

- Planting, inspecting, and harvesting crops.
- Irrigating farm soil and maintaining ditches or pipes and pumps.
- Operating and servicing farm machinery and tools.
- Applying fertilizer or pesticide solutions to control insects, fungi, and weeds.
- Moving plants, shrubs, and trees with wheelbarrows or tractors.
- Feeding livestock and cleaning and disinfecting their cages, pens, and yards.
- Examining animals to detect symptoms of illnesses or injuries and administering vaccines to protect animals from diseases.
- Using brands, tags, or tattoos to mark livestock ownership and grade.
- Herding livestock to pastures for grazing or to scales, trucks, or other enclosures.

An animal breeder's specific duties can be found [here](#), which include:

- Selecting animals that will produce offspring with desired traits and characteristics — including pigs that produce leaner meat.
- Knowing which animals to breed and when to breed them — keeping detailed records.
- Noting animal health, size, and weight as well as the amount and quality of its meat product or byproduct.
- Tracking the traits of offspring.
- Consulting with farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers about their livestock.

The work environment is often outdoors and "difficult" with a full-time schedule that varies to include early mornings, weekends, and holidays.

Agriculturist/Agronomist (Animal Scientist)

Found under the handbook's listing for agricultural and food scientists, including animal scientists, the category description is "research ways to improve the efficiency and safety of agricultural establishments and products."

The pay band was \$43,060 to \$129,490 with a median salary of \$74,950 in 2022, according to BLS. The median salary for animal scientists was \$69,390 in 2022.

According to the handbook, an animal scientist's category-wide duties include:

- Conduct research and experiments to improve the productivity and sustainability of field crops and farm animals.
- Create new food products and develop new and better ways to process, package, and deliver them.
- Study the composition of soil as it relates to plant growth and research ways to improve it.
- Communicate research findings to the scientific community, food producers, and the public.
- Travel between facilities to oversee the implementation of new projects.

An animal scientist's specific duties can be found [here](#), which include:

- Conducting research on domestic farm animals.
- Exploring animal genetics, nutrition, reproduction, diseases, growth, and development with a focus on food production.
- Developing efficient ways to produce and process meat, poultry, eggs, and milk.
- Crossbreeding animals for productivity or other characteristics.
- Advising on upgrading housing for animals, lowering animal death rates, increasing growth rates, or increasing the quality and efficiency of livestock.

The work environment includes laboratories, offices, and the field, with most time spent studying data and reports. Fieldwork would include farm or processing plant visits.

Veterinarian

Found under the handbook's listing for veterinarians, the category description is "care for the health of animals and work to protect public health."

The pay band was \$62,530 to \$174,500 in 2022 with a median salary of \$103,260.

According to the handbook, a veterinarian's category-wide duties include:

- Examining animals to assess their health and diagnose problems.
- Treating and dressing wounds.
- Performing surgery on animals.
- Testing for and vaccinating against diseases.
- Operating medical equipment, such as x-ray machines.
- Advising animal owners about general care, medical conditions, and treatments.
- Prescribing medication.
- Euthanizing animals.

A veterinarian's specific duties can be found [here](#), which include:

- Visiting farms and ranches to treat ill and injured animals and to test for and vaccinate for disease.
- Advising farm owners/managers about feeding, housing, and general practices.

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Veterinarian (continued)

For food safety and inspection veterinarians, specific duties include:

- Inspecting and testing livestock and animal products for major animal diseases.
- Providing vaccines to treat animals.
- Enhancing animal welfare.
- Conducting research to improve animal health.
- Enforcing government food safety regulations.
- Designing and administering animal and public health programs to prevent and control transmissible disease.

The work environment includes private clinics/hospitals, farms, laboratories, classrooms, or zoos.

Horticulturist (Agricultural and Food Scientist)

Found under the handbook's listing for agricultural and food scientists, the category description is "research ways to improve the efficiency and safety of agricultural establishments and products." They may "improve inspection standards or overall food quality

The pay band was \$43,060 to \$129,490 in 2022 with a median salary of \$74,940.

According to the handbook, a horticulturist's category-wide duties include:

- Conducting research and experiments to improve the productivity and sustainability of field crops and farm animals.
- Creating new food products and developing new and better ways to process, package, and deliver them.
- Studying the composition of soil as it relates to plant growth and researching ways to improve it.
- Communicating research findings to the scientific community, food producers, and the public.
- Traveling between facilities to oversee the implementation of new projects.

For animal scientists, specific duties can be found [here](#), which include:

- Conducting research on domestic farm animals with a focus on food production.
- Focusing research particularly on animal genetics, nutrition, reproduction, diseases, growth, and development.
- They work to develop efficient ways to produce and process meat, poultry, eggs, and milk.
- They may crossbreed animals to improve characteristics.
- They advise farmers on upgrading housing for animals, lowering animal death rates, increasing growth rates, and otherwise increasing the efficiency of livestock.

Learn more about policy issues to support and strengthen pork producers at [NPPC.org](https://www.nppc.org).

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