



# Remuneration of veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service in the Russian Federation Subjects

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## SUMMARY

Remuneration is one of the main factors that can motivate an employee to work productively, as well as influence the prestige of a profession. The paper presents the results of analysis of remuneration of the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service for the country as a whole, for the federal districts and 85 regions of the country, as well as at various organizational levels within the Veterinary Service for 2021. The assessment of the veterinary specialist salary level as compared with that throughout the economy of the Russian Federation Subjects is presented. The veterinary specialist average monthly salary for the State Veterinary Service as a whole varies within a wide range: from 16.3 to 114.9 thousand rubles. The minimum and maximum salaries at different organizational levels within the State Veterinary Service differ 5–8-fold. The veterinary specialist salary level is lower than that for the economy of the relevant Russian Federation Subject: for the State Veterinary Service as a whole – in 69 regions of the country, for treatment and preventive care institutions – in 71 Subjects, in laboratory diagnosis institutions – in 72 Subjects. Of all the federal districts, the North Caucasian Federal District has the lowest veterinary specialist salary level both in absolute terms (about 21 thousand rubles) and as compared with the average for the economy of the Subjects of this federal district (64%). The paper also examines veterinary specialist modal and median salary values, which allow for the assessment of remuneration of this category of the State Veterinary Service staff from different viewpoints.

**Keywords:** remuneration, funding of the Veterinary Service, veterinary specialist, Veterinary Service, organizational levels within the Veterinary Service, median salary, modal salary

**Acknowledgements:** This work was funded by the FGBI "ARRIAH" within the scope of research activities "Veterinary Welfare".

**For citation:** Klinovitskaya I. M., Shibayev M. A., Karaulov A. K., Selyanin A. M. Remuneration of veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service in the Russian Federation Subjects. *Veterinary Science Today*. 2023; 12 (3): 265–272. DOI: 10.29326/2304-196X-2023-12-3-265-272.

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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УДК 619:331.2(470)

# Оплата труда ветеринарных специалистов государственной ветеринарной службы в субъектах Российской Федерации

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## РЕЗЮМЕ

Одним из главных факторов, способных мотивировать работника к продуктивному труду, а также влиять на престиж профессии, является уровень заработной платы. В статье представлены результаты анализа заработной платы ветеринарных специалистов государственной ветеринарной службы в целом по стране, по федеральным округам, по 85 регионам страны, а также на различных уровнях организации ветеринарной службы в 2021 г. Приведена оценка заработной платы ветспециалистов в сравнении с зарплатой, сложившейся в целом по экономике субъектов Российской Федерации. Размер среднемесячной заработной платы ветеринарных специалистов в целом по госветслужбе варьируется в широком диапазоне: от 16,3 до 114,9 тыс. руб. На разных уровнях организации госветслужбы отличия между минимальной и максимальной заработной платой составляют 5–8 раз. Размер оплаты труда ветспециалистов не достигает размера оплаты труда, сложившегося по экономике своих субъектов, в целом по госветслужбе – в 69 регионах страны, в учреждениях лечебно-профилактического звена – в 71 субъекте, в организациях лабораторно-диагностического профиля – в 72 субъектах. Из всех федеральных округов наибольшее отставание в заработной плате отмечается в Северо-Кавказском федеральном округе как в абсолютном значении (около 21 тыс. руб.), так и по отношению к средней по экономике субъектов данного федерального округа (64%). В работе рассмотрены также значения модальной и медианной заработной плат ветеринарных специалистов, позволяющие с разных сторон оценить размер оплаты труда данной категории сотрудников госветслужбы.

**Ключевые слова:** оплата труда, финансирование ветеринарной службы, ветеринарный специалист, ветеринарная служба, уровни организации ветеринарной службы, медианная зарплата, модальная зарплата

**Благодарности:** Работа выполнена за счет средств ФГБУ «ВНИИЗЖ» в рамках тематики научно-исследовательских работ «Ветеринарное благополучие».

**Для цитирования:** Клиновицкая И. М., Шибяев М. А., Караулов А. К., Селянин А. М. Оплата труда ветеринарных специалистов государственной ветеринарной службы в субъектах Российской Федерации. *Ветеринария сегодня*. 2023; 12 (3): 265–272. DOI: 10.29326/2304-196X-2023-12-3-265-272.

**Конфликт интересов:** Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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## INTRODUCTION

A veterinary specialist is one of the highly demanded professions. The effective organization of the Veterinary Service of the country is essential for ensuring both animal and human health, since certain animal diseases also pose a risk for humans. Besides, animal health professionals play an important role in the food security of the country.

The performance of the State Veterinary Service is influenced by many factors, with remuneration being one of the key ones. The salary depends on the location, the budget of a region, the size/level of a veterinary institution, a veterinary specialist's qualification, etc. In most cases, remuneration is the main motivation for employees to properly fulfill their responsibilities, with an impact also on the availability of qualified personnel in this sphere [1]. At the same time, veterinary specialist remuneration does not always match the complexity and significance of the work performed and the responsibility incurred. Active measures are, therefore, required to improve the veterinary specialist remuneration system to ensure the preservation and development of human resources. Decent salaries for this category of staff constitute the basis for the appropriate implementation of tasks assigned and the enhancement of the veterinary profession prestige [2]. Particularly given that the improvement of the living standards and the reduction of imbalances between the regions of the country are among the main directions of the social policy of the Government [3, 4].

The aim of the study was to assess the veterinary specialist salary level for the State Veterinary Service as a whole, for the Russian Federation Subjects and at different organizational levels within the State Veterinary Service.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data for 2021 obtained from the veterinary executive authorities of the Russian Federation Subjects served as a practical basis for the analysis of remuneration of the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service of the Russian Federation Subjects. The data were provided according to the primary data collection form developed by the FGBI "ARRIAH" and covered the following organizational levels within the Veterinary Service:

- veterinary executive authorities of the Russian Federation Subjects (departments, committees, administrations, etc.), exclusive of their subordinate institutions;

- treatment and preventive care institutions (animal disease control stations, veterinary centres, veterinary clinics, veterinary units, veterinary offices, etc.);

- laboratory diagnosis institutions (veterinary diagnostic laboratories of different levels: oblast, raion, inter-raion, etc.).

The information was submitted from 85 Subjects of the Russian Federation. The data were collected using the "Assol.Express" component of the Federal Governmental Information System "VetIS" (FGIS "VetIS").

The theoretical and methodological framework for the study included the laws and regulations of the Russian Federation, data from the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and analysis methods described in the contemporary scientific papers on this subject.

Analysis techniques, the methods of comparative analysis, descriptive statistics, consolidation, grouping, graphing were used for the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The activities of the State Veterinary Service of the Russian Federation Subjects were funded from three sources: the federal budget, the budgets of the Subjects and extra-budgetary sources [5, 6]. The funds allocated for salaries averaged 65% of the total funding in this sphere. The funds for the payment of staff salaries were allocated as follows: 2% from the federal budget (only 12 Subjects received the funding), 61% from the budgets of the Russian Federation Subjects and 37% from the extra-budgetary sources of the veterinary institutions of the State Veterinary Service of the regions.

The percentage of funds allocated for salaries varied from Subject to Subject, ranging from 26 to 86% of the total funding of the regional Veterinary Service. However, based on the analysis results, there is no direct correlation between this indicator and the veterinary specialist salary level (both in absolute terms and as compared with the average for the economy of a particular Subject). Everything depends on the actual amount of the Veterinary Service funding in a particular region of the country.

Figure 1 presents the veterinary specialist average monthly salary for the State Veterinary Service as a whole and at different organizational levels within the Veterinary Service.

The data show that the veterinary specialist average monthly salary for the State Veterinary Service as a whole

varies within a wide range from 16.3 to 114.9 thousand rubles from Subject to Subject (42 thousand rubles on average). Salary values differ 7-fold for the treatment and preventive care institutions, 5-fold for the laboratory diagnosis institutions and 8-fold for the veterinary executive authorities.

There is also a great deal of remuneration variation across the federal districts. For the Veterinary Service as a whole, it ranged from 21 thousand rubles in the North Caucasian Federal District to 64 thousand rubles in the Far Eastern Federal District (Fig. 2). High incomes are most commonly reported for the Subjects, in which northern allowances and other compensations are established, as well as for Moscow. It is not entirely correct to compare these regions with many others; therefore, a relative indicator representing the ratio of the veterinary specialist salary in a Russian Federation Subject to that throughout the economy of this Subject will be more significant (Fig. 3).

The diagram shows that the veterinary specialist average salary for the Veterinary Service as a whole is lower than the average monthly nominal salary for the economy of a particular Subject in 69 out of 85 regions of the country; among these, the veterinary specialist average salary in 24 Subjects amounted to 81 to 90% of that for the relevant region. The veterinary specialist salary exceeded the average for a Subject only in 16 regions of the country. In 2 Subjects, the veterinary specialist average salary made up only 41 and 44% of the average for the economy of these Subjects.

The veterinary specialist salary in the veterinary treatment and preventive care institutions in more than half of the country's regions (namely, in 46) ranged from 71 to 90% of the average monthly salary for the economy of the relevant Subject (Fig. 4). The salary was close to the regional level in 9 Subjects and exceeded it in 14 Subjects. The largest salary gap was observed in 16 Subjects of the country, where the veterinary specialist salary was 30–50% lower than the average for the relevant regions.

The veterinary specialist salary in the veterinary diagnostic laboratories in 19 regions of the country ranged from 71 to 80% of the average monthly salary for the economy of these Subjects (Fig. 5). The salary was below this level in 28 Subjects; in 5 Subjects out of these, it made up only 34–44% of the average for the relevant Subject. The situation appears to be most optimistic only in 10 Russian Federation Subjects.

The veterinary executive authority staff salary was lower than the average nominal salary for the relevant Subject only in 5 Subjects and exceeded it in other regions.

The domestic statistics mainly relies on the average salary. However, due to large income differences, it does not accurately reflect the real salary level. Therefore, the comparative assessment of the average salary and the most common (modal) / middle (median) salaries is of particular interest [7, 8]. Let us consider these salary values for the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service and compare them with the above-mentioned average values.

A modal salary is the most frequently occurring salary value for a particular category of staff, here – for veterinary specialists [9]. Veterinary specialist salary distribution based on factual data for 85 Russian Federation Subjects is shown in Figure 6.

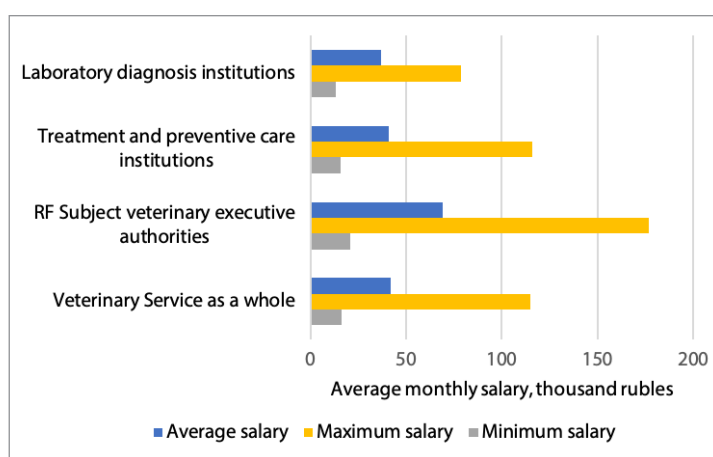


Fig. 1. Veterinary specialist remuneration in the Russian Federation by organizational level within the Veterinary Service, thousand rubles

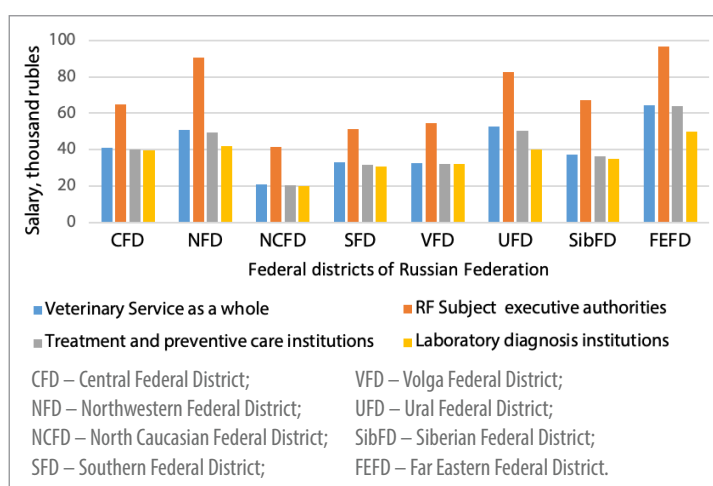


Fig. 2. Veterinary specialist remuneration in the federal districts of the Russian Federation, thousand rubles

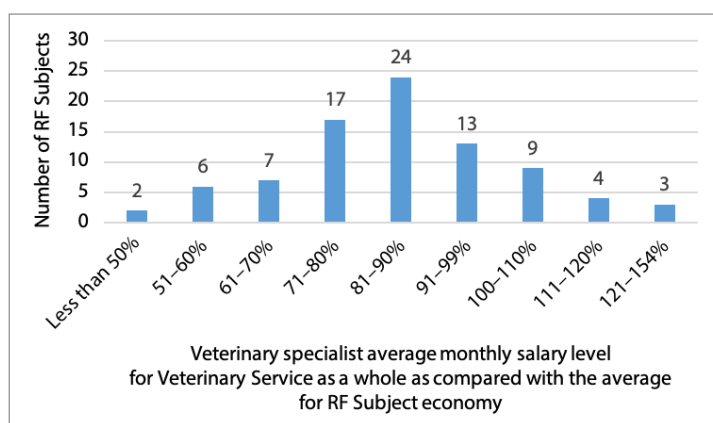


Fig. 3. Veterinary specialist salary level for the State Veterinary Service as a whole as compared with the average for the Russian Federation Subject economy

Based on the data presented, the veterinary specialist modal salary in Russia for the Veterinary Service as a whole ranged from 35 to 40 thousand rubles; that for the veterinary executive authorities – from 50 to 55 thousand rubles; for the treatment and preventive care institutions – from

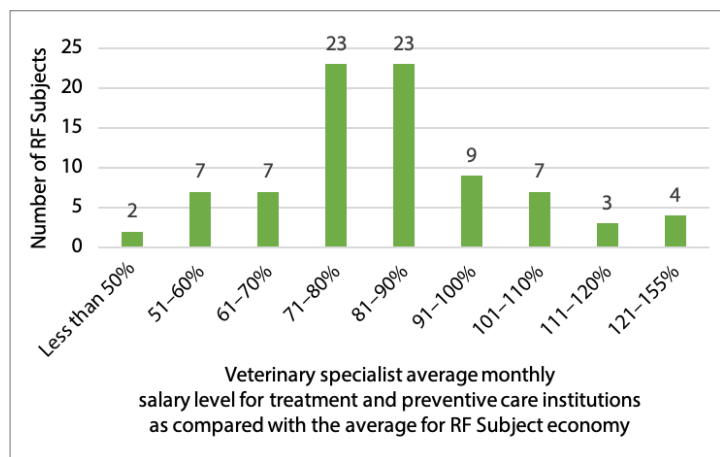


Fig. 4. Veterinary specialist salary level for treatment and preventive care institutions as compared with the average for the Russian Federation Subject economy

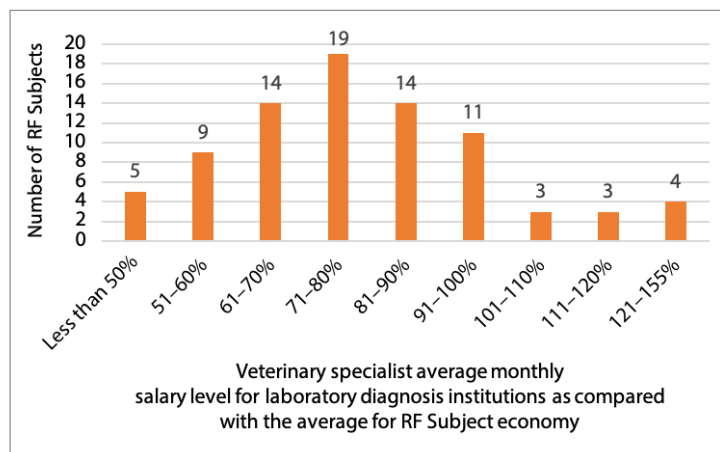


Fig. 5. Veterinary specialist salary level for laboratory diagnosis institutions as compared with the average for the Russian Federation Subject economy

35 to 40 thousand rubles; for the laboratory diagnosis institutions – from 25 to 30 thousand rubles.

For intervals with the highest frequency (18, 13, 20 and 19, respectively), the conditional mode value was calculated using the formula:

$$Mo = X_{Mo} + i_{Mo} \frac{f_{Mo} - f_{Mo-1}}{2f_{Mo} - f_{Mo-1} - f_{Mo+1}},$$

where  $Mo$  is the mode;

$X_{Mo}$  is the lower (initial) limit of the modal interval;

$i_{Mo}$  is the size of the modal interval (difference between its upper and lower limits);

$f_{Mo}$  is the frequency of the modal interval;

$f_{Mo-1}$  is the frequency of the interval preceding the modal one;

$f_{Mo+1}$  is the frequency of the interval succeeding the modal one.

Based on the calculation results for each organizational level within the Veterinary Service, the veterinary specialist modal salary for the State Veterinary Service of the Russian Federation as a whole was about 36 thousand rubles; for the executive authorities – 54 thousand rubles; for the treatment and preventive care institutions – 35 thousand rubles; for the laboratory diagnosis institutions – 28 thou-

sand rubles, i.e. somewhat lower than the above arithmetic mean values.

The modal salary reflects the most common salary value for this category of specialists, and the median salary is the middle of the statistical series of all salaries under consideration for 85 Russian Federation Subjects. The median salary indicates that the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service in 50% of the Russian Federation Subjects earn more than this value and those in the other 50% of the Subjects earn less than this value [10, 11].

The veterinary specialist salary level for the Veterinary Service as a whole ranged from 16.3 ( $n = 1$ ) to 114.9 ( $n = 85$ ) thousand rubles across the Russian Federation Subjects, and the median value was 37.0 thousand rubles ( $n = 43$ ) ( $n$  is the sequential number of a Subject in the ranked set of salary values). This means that the veterinary specialist salary for the State Veterinary Service as a whole is less than 37.0 thousand rubles in 42 Subjects of the country. This value for the executive authorities is about 58 thousand rubles; for the treatment and preventive care institutions – 36 thousand rubles; for the laboratory diagnosis institutions – 35 thousand rubles.

It should be noted that the median salary serves now as an important indicator for the determination of the minimum salary level in the country, which does not depend on the minimum subsistence level of the working population, as was the case before, but is established, starting from 2021, taking into account the median salary [12, 13]. More details on the salaries under consideration are presented in Figure 7.

Thus, for the Veterinary Service as a whole, the arithmetic mean salary was 42 thousand rubles, but such salary or higher was paid to the veterinary specialists only in 25 Subjects of the country. The veterinary specialist salary in half of the Russian Federation regions exceeded 37 thousand rubles and was below this amount in the other half of the regions. The most frequent salary paid to this category of the State Veterinary Service staff falls within the range of 35 to 40 thousand rubles and amounts to about 36 thousand rubles. Thus, the calculations performed allowed for the assessment of the state veterinary institutions' staff remuneration from different viewpoints.

The data presented in the paper show that the salary level for most of the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service of the Russian Federation is low; besides, there is a large difference in the income of the specialists working in different regions of the country. In our view, this is not quite fair. It may be appropriate, when establishing the veterinary specialist salary, to follow the principle applied to the establishment of the medical worker salary, since these professions are similar in many aspects, so such approach would be rather reasonable, in our opinion. In accordance with the "May Decrees" of the Russian Federation President, the medical practitioner (doctor) average salary shall make up 200% of the average for the relevant region [14]. There is also the Country Doctor programme in place, which envisages the payment of up to 2 million rubles for the medical workers that become employed in the countryside under certain conditions [15]. In addition, pursuant to Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 847 of 1 June 2021, a pilot project aimed at the further improvement of the medical worker remuneration system was launched in 7 regions of the country in 2022 [16].



Thus, new approaches are constantly being developed for the regulation of medical worker remuneration. We would like to see the same in the veterinary sphere. It is fair to point out that a new section regarding the specific features of the remuneration system for the staff members of the state veterinary institutions was first included in the Uniform recommendations for the establishment of remuneration systems for employees of state and municipal institutions at the federal, regional and local levels for 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Uniform recommendations) [17]. However, the Uniform recommendations for 2020 and those for 2021 do not specify the indicative lower limit for the veterinary specialist salary, but only state that the salary in each of these periods should not be lower than that in the previous year [18]. An addition providing for the progressive salary increase to achieve a level that will not be lower than the average monthly salary for the relevant Russian Federation Subject was made only to the Uniform recommendations for 2022 [19]. Similar recommendations are laid down in Ordinance of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 3789-r of 7 December 2022 [20]. It is, therefore, hoped that the veterinary specialist salary situation in the Russian Federation Subjects will be more optimistic starting from 2023.

In many regions of the Russian Federation, the relatively low remuneration of the state veterinary institutions' staff for the analyzed year (2021) was partially compensated by various social support measures for the veterinary specialists. In particular, based on the data from the veterinary executive authorities of the Russian Federation Subjects for 2021, 24 regions developed a programme for the improvement of the staffing of the Veterinary Service of the relevant Subject (including the attraction of young professionals); 38 Subjects have a procedure in place for the provision of a dwelling or payments to buy and rent it; 57 regions are implementing a procedure for the target admission to the higher educational institutions for the specialty "veterinary medicine". Unfortunately, only 40% of young specialists became employed in the State Veterinary Service Institutions over the past 10 years.

The comparative analysis of salaries of medical workers and veterinary specialists across the federal districts revealed the following regularity: the veterinary specialist salary level tends to be higher in the districts with the higher medical worker salary level [21].

Each region deals with the veterinary specialist remuneration issue on its own, depending on the local budget available; there is, therefore, a need for the federal material support programme for the veterinary specialists (especially, early-career ones). A low salary makes the profession of a veterinarian less attractive, and this results in incomplete staffing with veterinary specialists in the regions: such vacancies are fully filled in only 7 out of 85 Subjects. That said, the animal and human disease freedom of the country directly depends on the work of the veterinary specialists.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the veterinary specialist salary data provided by the veterinary executive authorities of the Russian Federation Subjects allowed for the assessment of remuneration of the state veterinary institutions' staff for the country as a whole, as well as for the federal districts and individual Subjects.

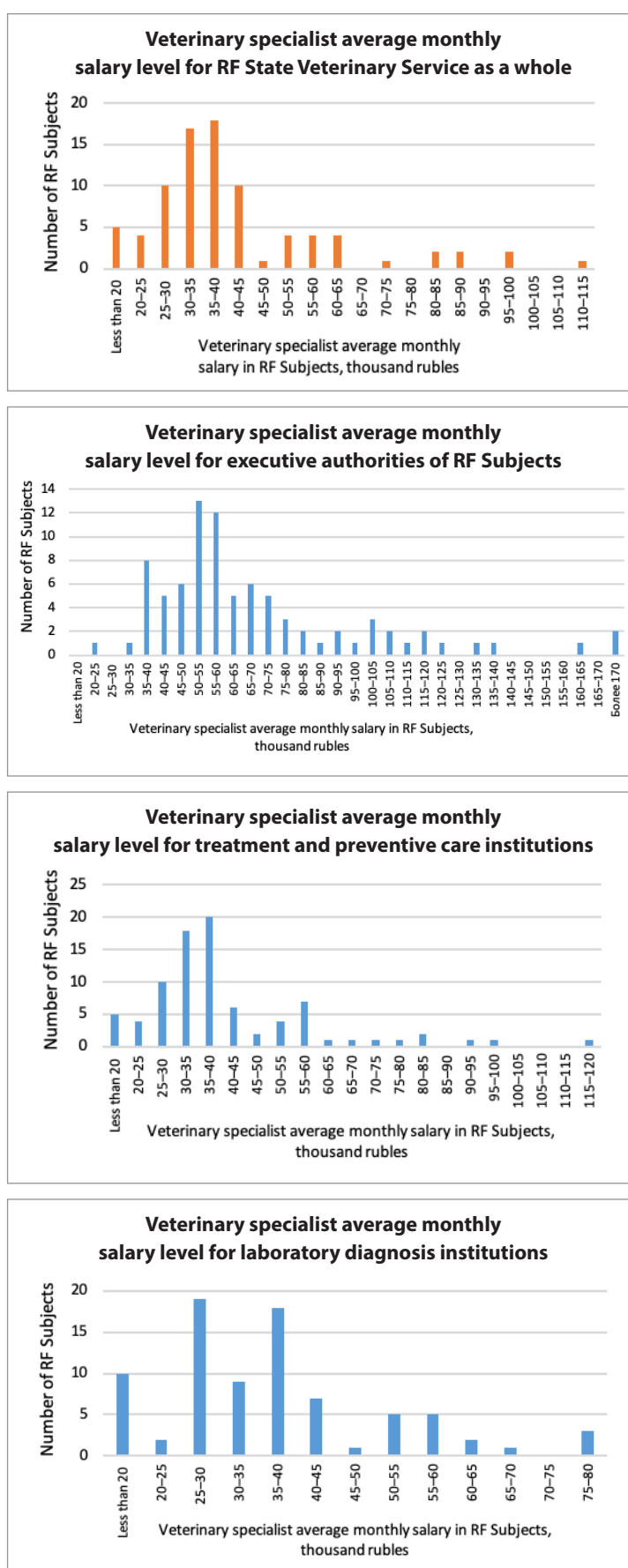


Fig. 6. Distribution of the Russian Federation Subjects by veterinary specialist salary at different organizational levels within the Veterinary Service

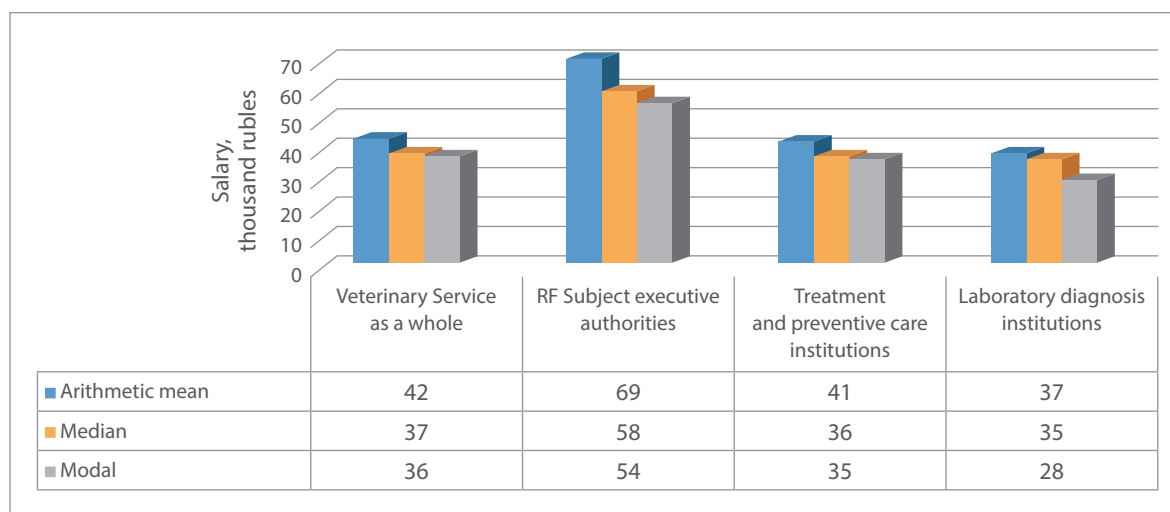


Fig. 7. Comparative data on arithmetic mean, modal and median salaries for veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service of the Russian Federation

The funding allocated for salaries was mainly sourced from the budgets of the Russian Federation Subjects, which accounted for 61% of the total funding intended for the payment of staff salaries.

The veterinary specialist average monthly salary varies significantly across the Russian Federation Subjects (7-fold). In 69 out of 85 regions of the Russian Federation, the veterinary specialist salary for the Veterinary Service as a whole is lower than the average monthly salary for the economy of these Subjects.

It was found that the most frequent salary paid to this category of staff falls within the range of 35 to 40 thousand rubles and amounts to about 36 thousand rubles. The veterinary specialist remuneration for the Veterinary Service as a whole exceeds 37 thousand rubles a month in half of the Russian Federation Subjects and is below this amount in the other half.

Low salaries of the veterinary specialists of the State Veterinary Service are indicative of insufficient funding in this sphere. In our opinion, the fair regulation of remuneration requires taking additional measures enshrined in the federal programmes. Such programmes can, for example, envisage material rewards for the Veterinary Services of the Subjects for the maintenance of highly dangerous animal disease freedom. However, this proposal requires a thorough consideration due to the possibility of illusory animal disease freedom in the territories under their responsibility. A disease free status granted to the relevant region with respect to a particular animal infectious disease within the framework of regionalization of the Russian Federation may become a ground for incentive payments to the veterinary specialists of the regional Veterinary Services [22, 23]. The recognition of such status enhances the significance of the region as regards the attraction of investment to the economy of the Subject, in particular to the livestock sector and agriculture as a whole.

Such annual incentive payments can also be legislatively established at the regional level, i.e. additional payments can be made from the Subject budget to the veterinary specialists of the municipal districts that have been free from highly dangerous animal diseases during the year. In our view, such approach will encourage the veterinarians

of each Subject / municipal district to make the utmost effort to maintain animal disease freedom in their region. All this requires deep knowledge, well-honed skills and continuous professional improvement. That is why the work of the veterinary specialists in our country should be decently paid for.

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*Received 13.02.2023*

*Revised 30.03.2023*

*Accepted 05.04.2023*

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