

National Animal Health Reporting System Update

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The National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) is designed to collect data through State animal health officials on the occurrence of confirmed World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) reportable diseases in commercial livestock, poultry, and aquaculture species. NAHRS is one part of the United States' comprehensive, integrated National Animal Health Surveillance System (NAHSS). The NAHRS is a joint effort of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA), the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), and USDA-APHIS, and is coordinated by the VS Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) National Surveillance Unit in Fort Collins, CO. Through animal disease surveillance activities, State personnel report qualitative information (yes/no) monthly to NAHRS on the confirmed occurrence of each NAHRS listed disease. USDA-APHIS uses NAHRS data as one of several sources to complete U.S. animal disease status reports to the OIE as well as to support trade negotiations.

Online reporting system well received

The *NAHSS Outlook* reported on the development of a NAHRS Web-based online reporting system and database in October 2004. The online reporting system was pilot-tested that fall and the system was fielded for general use beginning in January 2005. The secure NAHRS online reporting system has been well received by NAHRS participating States. In the first year, approximately 80 percent of participating States used the NAHRS Web-based reporting system. The NAHRS online reporting system provides States with more timely animal health disease information, and also allows State personnel to access the cumulative summary level data from both the State and national levels. The online reporting process provides the flexibility for States to set up the system to correlate with how NAHRS reportable disease information flows in their States. The Web-based reporting system allows multiple designated users to provide input into the system, yet only a limited number of State individuals are authorized to approve the data and submit it to CEAH. The online reporting system also allows States to share animal disease summary level information by "Reader Access" with other officials involved in animal disease surveillance and reporting in the State, including Area Veterinarians-In-Charge, area epidemiologists, public health veterinarians, and State agriculture department representatives. Modifications continue to be made to the NAHRS online reporting system as a result of feedback from the field and system users.

OIE reporting criteria modified

In 2005, the OIE approved changes to its disease reporting criteria, including eliminating the OIE A and B disease lists and combining them into a single OIE reportable list. The OIE also developed new criteria on what diseases should be reportable. The OIE reportable list was revised through this process, adding several new reportable diseases while eliminating others. The NAHRS reportable disease list was originally designed to correlate with OIE Lists A and B, because one of the primary uses of NAHRS is

providing information for U.S. OIE reporting and to add credibility and validity to this reporting. To continue this focus of NAHRS, the USAHA/AAVLD Information Systems Committee agreed at its November 2005 meeting to modify NAHRS to align with the OIE reportable disease list. These changes were made in early 2006, which required the updating of the NAHRS disease reporting criteria and modifications to the State reporting form and the NAHRS online reporting tool. All of the updates to the NAHRS have been made and implementation completed; States may, however, require additional time to modify and update their own reporting criteria.

During 2005 through early 2006, five more States began participating in NAHRS, for a total of 45 States. Concentrated efforts continue to recruit the last of the nonparticipating States, and several of these have taken steps toward participation.

In summary, the NAHRS is intended to be one part of a comprehensive and integrated animal health information system. NAHRS reports provide a general overview of the OIE reportable animal disease status in the United States and currently, no other comprehensive reporting system of OIE reportable diseases exists in the nation. The information gathered through NAHRS is valuable and utilized, but there continues to be a critical need for all 50 States to actively participate in NAHRS for a truly credible **national** summary report.

Additional information on NAHRS can be obtained at the NAHRS home page: <http://.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nahrs>, or by contacting NAHRS coordinator Dr. Stan Bruntz at (970) 494-7246 or e-mail: Stanley.Bruntz@aphis.usda.gov.