

New Developments in NAHRS

The National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) is a joint effort of the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA), American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). NAHRS was designed to collect data from chief State animal health officials on the presence of confirmed World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) reportable diseases in specific commercial livestock, poultry, and aquaculture species in the United States. It is a key component of the National Animal Health Surveillance System.

NAHRS is based on the recognized presence or absence of OIE reportable diseases rather than the prevalence of disease. Within a State, data about animal disease occurrences are gathered from as many verifiable sources as possible and consolidated into a monthly report submitted to the National Surveillance Unit (NSU), where the information is verified, summarized, and compiled into a national report. The commodities currently covered are cattle, sheep, goats, equine, swine, commercial poultry, and commercial food fish. Commodity working groups consisting of representatives from USAHA, AAVLD, industry, USDA-APHIS, and private practitioners developed the NAHRS reporting criteria.

NAHRS protects the global market share of America's animals and animal products by helping the United States meet trade commitments, reduce disruption of existing trade, and aid in expansion of trade. Individual States benefit from participating in NAHRS by strengthening their internal animal health surveillance abilities and enabling animal industries to provide information needed for international trade.

As of October 2007, 46 States were reporting to NAHRS, an increase from 44 States reporting in 2006. In 2008 the direction of NAHRS will move from recruiting States to national awareness of the program and continued improvement and validation of NAHRS reporting. This will be an important step toward the objective that the NAHRS reflects the comprehensive summary-level animal disease status of the United States and individual State NAHRS reporting reflects the summary-level disease status in that State. NAHRS Steering Committee membership also has been enhanced to include representatives from the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, Veterinary Services (VS) Area Veterinarians in Charge and the National Poultry Improvement Plan.

The expansion of NAHRS aquaculture reporting is moving forward, with monthly teleconference meetings held between NAHRS representatives, VS aquaculture program staff, and other involved parties and stakeholders.

NAHRS Online Reporting Tool Updated

A new version of the NAHRS online reporting application was released this month.

The NAHRS online reporting tool enables State animal health officials to complete their monthly NAHRS reports via the Internet, with assurance of secure data transfer and information confidentiality. State animal health officials may also use the NAHRS online tool to view past monthly reports. The online reporting tool enables the national NAHRS coordinator at the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) to quickly and accurately merge information from monthly State NAHRS reports to provide timely reports.

Enhancements in the new application, Version 2.0, include:

- A new user home page with clear links to current State and national reports,
- New features that allow users to easily provide comments associated with disease reporting,
- Easier options for creating and saving PDF copies of reports, and
- New reporting options for equine infectious anemia.

Information about NAHRS, including the link to the reporting application, can be found on the NAHRS web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nahrs/>.