

National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) Online Reporting Tool

The National Surveillance Unit (NSU) and the VS Application Information Management (VS AIM) team have collaborated to create a Web-based online reporting tool and database for the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS). The NAHRS online reporting tool will enable chief animal health officials from participating States to submit their monthly NAHRS information via a secure Web site and view past NAHRS reports submitted by their State. The reporting tool will simplify the NAHRS reporting process while ensuring the confidentiality of State-level information on the confirmed presence or absence of Office International des Epizooties (OIE) LIST A and B diseases.

The NAHRS is designed to provide data from chief State animal health officials on the presence of confirmed OIE LIST A and B diseases in specific commercial livestock, poultry, and aquaculture species in the United States. The 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), and is coordinated by the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), NSU. The NAHRS is one of several sources of information used to provide required animal health status reports to OIE and to maintain and expand U.S. markets. With the NAHRS in place, U.S. representatives can assure foreign governments of systematic animal health monitoring in U.S. livestock, commercial poultry and aquaculture.

State participation in the NAHRS is voluntary and currently, there are 40 participating States. Until now, monthly animal disease occurrence data (presence / absence of List A and B diseases) have been submitted on paper forms via e-mail, fax, or mail to the NAHRS coordinator in Fort Collins, CO. State-level animal health status data are confidential – only national reports that summarize disease presence/ absence information for the U.S. as a whole are shared with OIE or other official audiences.

Since the inception of the NAHRS, many States have requested an electronic or Internet-based reporting system that would facilitate data submission and eliminate the need for double data entry (i.e., data entry onto paper forms at the State level and subsequently into spreadsheets or electronic data files by the Federal NAHRS coordinator) while ensuring the secure and confidential transfer of State-level animal health information. The NSU and VS-AIM teams have collaborated to develop a database and online reporting that enables chief animal health officials to complete their monthly NAHRS reports via the Internet and then monitor the progress of those reports, as well as view past reports for their State. The system's security features assure that information for a particular State can only be viewed by the chief animal health official for that State or individuals that he/she specifically designates to view reports. At the Federal level, the NAHRS coordinator can use the NAHRS online reporting tool features to verify State reports and efficiently create National reports.

The NAHRS online reporting tool uses a Web interface that links to a secure Oracle database. A pilot test of this system is planned for November and December, 2004. The NSU plans to have the database available for use by all the NAHRS participants in early 2005. Additional information about the NAHRS can be found on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nahrs.