Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) Fact Sheet

History

Foreign animal diseases (FADs) are considered a threat to the United States and, if uncontrolled, may significantly affect human health and animal production.

The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) developed the EMRS in 2001 in conjunction with other Federal agencies and personnel (Emergency Management, Veterinary Services, laboratory officials, regional and area officials, epidemiologists, and foreign animal disease diagnosticians) to provide a manageable repository for storing disease surveillance data and foreign animal disease investigation data.

Since then, the EMRS has been used for more than 20 outbreaks, including:

- 2002 Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) outbreak in Virginia
- 2002-2003 Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak in California
- 2007 Tuberculosis (TB) outbreak in New Mexico
- 2008 Tuberculosis (TB) outbreak in California

System Overview

The EMRS is a computer-based system designed to automate and manage data related to all aspects of an animal disease outbreak or animal-associated disaster. The system is used by Federal, State, Tribal, and local animal health officials (and human health officials) for:

- Routine reporting of FAD investigations
- Surveillance and control programs
- State-specific disease outbreaks
- National animal health emergency responses

The system allows users to:

- View data
- Create reports
- Create maps of specific areas
- Export data to other databases or spreadsheets

Data is secured by means of encryption and access control.

Access is controlled by:

- User ID and password
- Access Control List
- Read and write authorization permissions that are specific to individual EMRS electronic forms
- Location-specific servers

System Details

The EMRS accommodates the following data-entry processes:

- **Users** can enter data directly into the EMRS using a network or dial-up web connection.
- **Field staff** can submit completed paper forms to their area offices, where data-entry personnel transfer the information from the paper forms into the EMRS.
- **Data** can be imported into the EMRS from other databases using web services.

The EMRS consists of four modules:

The system is designed to automate many of the tasks routinely associated with animal disease investigations and emergencies. It employs modules and interrelated forms to track investigations, general tasks, and administrative functions.

- **Investigation Module**—used to manage activities or tasks associated with disease control and premises surveillance. The main form in this module is the Investigation Summary form. This form is the starting point for all investigations in the EMRS; it serves as the source or parent document for all documents dealing with a specific premises. The Investigation Summary form is linked to "follow-up" forms; such as herd exam, lab submission, and tracing forms.

  This module also makes investigation data available through a mapping interface, allowing the user to:
  - See real-time, high quality maps of outbreak areas
  - Tailor necessary responses based on geographic features of the outbreak
  - Deliver maps to decision makers, government institutions, and the public

- **Administration Module**—used to order and manage personnel, equipment, and vehicles. The main form in this module is the Employee Profile. It includes contact and organization information for employees. The information in the Employee Profile is used by the Investigation Module when assigning work to individuals.

- **Task Management Module**—used for managing tasks that may not be directly related to a premises. This module facilitates the tracking of ongoing tasks; from the assignment of a task to an owner, to the recording of the task's completion.

- **Help Module**—provides links to information regarding specific fields, online forms, frequently asked questions, and user instructions.

EMRS Resources

- **Training** – Online tutorials for the EMRS Investigation and Administration modules are available in AgLearn. You can also use AgLearn to register for classroom training. If you do not have access to AgLearn, please contact the APHIS Technical Assistance Center (ATAC). Refer to the Help information below for contact information.

- **User Documentation** – Access to the documentation will be provided in the near future.

- **Help** – Two different types of help are available: EMRS technical help, and EMRS support.

  - Technical Help—Contact ATAC if you experience problems connecting to the EMRS servers, logging into the EMRS once access is granted, remembering your user password or user name, accessing AgLearn, etc.
    - Phone: (877) 944-8457
    - Email: atac@aphis.usda.gov

  - EMRS Support—Contact EMRS Support to suggest improvements, report software problems, inquire about training, or to ask general questions.

    Email: EMRSSupport@aphis.usda.gov