


National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) Supports U.S. Pork Industry via Swine 2006 Study

In July 2006, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's NAHMS will launch its fourth national study of America's swine industry, Swine 2006. Swine producers from 17 of the Nation's top pork-producing States will be asked to participate in this valuable study, which will take an in-depth look at the priority health and health management issues facing the U.S. swine industry. Here are just some of the reasons to participate in this important study:

- NAHMS studies can and have provided objective, scientific information addressing public concerns regarding the swine industry's health and management practices. This information can be valuable when those who are not familiar with production agriculture have misconceptions.
 - Producers understand the importance of animal health to their operations and the U.S. pork industry. NAHMS is the cornerstone of a national animal health surveillance program and works to provide a benchmark of the health of the U.S. swine herd.
 - NAHMS collects national data that provide objective science-based, third-party information used for education, policy development, and research. Ultimately, these data are used to facilitate trade, improve the health of the national herd, and support production of a quality product.
 - NAHMS has a history of addressing important issues in an accurate and responsible manner that benefits the pork industry. Specific examples include:
 - *E. coli* data were used by the Meat Export Federation to help keep the Japanese market open.
 - Production impact data were used to estimate the cost of PRRS to the industry, supporting the need for additional research funding.
 - Objective data were gathered regarding productivity and mortality levels in various housing systems.
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- Biosecurity practices were surveyed, and resulting data were used to help define industry needs for biosecurity education. This information is vital because a biosecurity breach resulting in the introduction of a foreign animal disease could affect the entire U.S. swine industry.
 - By conducting surveillance on trends in management practices, NAHMS provides a clear definition of at-risk populations and insight into how to best assess those populations for surveillance purposes. In addition, the NAHMS program identifies key indicators of swine health and productivity.
 - Findings related to knowledge, practices, and prevalence of toxoplasma provided guidance to the NPB in developing an education program and demonstrates the industry's commitment to producing safe food.
 - NAHMS reports have been used in the curricula of many U.S. veterinary schools.
 - Information has been cited by university and government researchers throughout the United States in grant proposals, papers, and presentations.
- NAHMS seeks to understand pork production at the industry level primarily to facilitate trade and to serve the pork industry as a resource to the national herd in the areas of education, policy, and research.
 - NAHMS data on management practices and health are used as a resource for producers, private practitioners, and university extension services.
 - NAHMS is committed to minimizing the burden of the study on producers through efficient allocation

and sampling of participants, and through the professional development of concise data collection instruments and precisely worded questions.

- NAHMS is a voluntary program and highly collaborative in nature, often coordinating with multiple State and Federal agriculture agencies, universities, and pharmaceutical companies. The last NAHMS swine study (Swine 2000) utilized three Federal agencies (including four ARS laboratories), four universities, and four pharmaceutical companies, all of which were directly involved in the implementation of the study.
- Robust producer participation in the NAHMS Swine 2006 study will maximize the generation of scientifically valid national estimates and application of this unique knowledge to: educating the producers and practitioners of tomorrow; shaping national policy by pork leaders and government agencies; measuring the impact of disease (such as PRRS or PCVAD); and conducting basic epidemiologic research on diseases impacting swine and/or human health.

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