

## **B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

The potential respondent universe for individuals receiving needs assessment surveys are:

- ☐ Members of producer groups (such as members of the Dairy Farmers of America).
- ☐ Members of veterinary practitioner groups.
- ☐ Individual producers.
- ☐ Academia.

Based on previous NAHMS needs assessments, the estimated response rate for these needs assessments is 30 percent for electronic and mail surveys, 100 percent for focus groups.

By nature, these studies only capture feedback from people that have strong feelings on the focus of future national studies. The 30 percent that reply via mail/web surveys provide valuable insights into the value of the NAHMS study and/or the need for a particular topic to be explored in a future NAHMS study. While it may look like a low response rate, needs assessments provide a valuable avenue to obtain feedback from stakeholders.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**

### **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection:**

Sampling methodology— knowledgeable members of the producer and industry groups will be asked to participate in needs assessments for upcoming studies.

### **Estimation procedure:**

Straight descriptive estimates with no associated standard errors

### **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification:**

Estimates of precision will not be made.

### **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures:**

There are no unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures and data collection cycles.

**Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Needs assessment surveys will be performed prior to all NAHMS studies. Commodity studies are performed on a 5-10 year rotational basis.

3. ***Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.***

### **Study Design:**

Three methods of performing needs assessments studies may be used:

- ☐ Mail questionnaires with postage paid return envelopes.
- ☐ World wide web electronic surveys, (this method may be offered as an option to mail respondents).
- ☐ In person interviews in small focus groups.

### **Contacting Respondents:**

- ☐ For mail questionnaires, participants will be sent an initial mailing which will include the questionnaire and an introductory discussion to encourage participation.
- ☐ Subject matter experts for the commodities being examined may contact producer or veterinary groups to have the assessment links to web surveys forwarded to their member list. Requests for participation may be published in industry publications.
- ☐ Subject matter experts may also set up focus groups. These groups typically consist of up to twelve participants from industry or producer groups. Focus group sessions are held during regularly scheduled meetings to minimize the impact of the information collection. The duration of these sessions typically last between one and four hours. A maximum of three focus group sessions may be used to solicit feedback from stakeholders.

### **Data Collection Steps:**

- Mail
  - Industry and producer groups will be contacted by subject matter experts and a contact person for the group will be identified.
  - Hard copy questionnaires will be mailed to contact persons to be forwarded on to their constituency.
  - Completed questionnaires will be mailed back to NAHMS via business reply envelopes.
- World Wide Web
  - Industry and producer groups, along with publication of interest, will be identified by the subject matter expert.
  - Links to the online survey questionnaire will be distributed.
  - A 60-day period will be established for data collection.
  - Results will be tabulated immediately after the 60-day period.

- Focus Groups
  - The subject matter expert will identify individual producer/industry participants.
  - Subject matter expert will invite contacts to a focus group meeting to discuss the upcoming study.
  - Meetings will be held at various locations, normally during regularly scheduled industry meetings, or via teleconference.

4. ***Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.***

The proposed survey questionnaires will be tested during a pretest phase involving less than 10 respondents. Results of these pretests will be utilized to refine the information collection in order to reduce respondent burden and improve the usefulness of the information.

5. ***Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and /or analyze the information for the agency.***

The statistical aspects of the design were coordinated by Mrs. Christine Koprak, Statistician, USDA: APHIS, Veterinary Services, CEAH, Fort Collins, CO, (970) 494-7325. The actual data collection will be conducted by NAHMS Subject Matter Experts. Contact persons for data collection are:

- Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator, USDA: APHIS, Veterinary Services, Washington, DC (202) 447-6835.

Analysis of the data will be accomplished by NAHMS veterinarians, epidemiologists, and statisticians under the direction of:

- Dr. Bruce Wagner, Center Leader, National Animal Health Monitoring Systems, USDA: APHIS, VS, CEAH, 2150 Centre Avenue, Building B MS2E7, Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117 (970) 494-7256.

The Agency also had this collection reviewed by NASS for evaluation of the statistical methods used.