



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

March 13, 2013

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

Centers for
Epidemiology and
Animal Health

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Perraut
Program Analyst
Office of Management and Budget, Desk Officer

THROUGH: Ruth Brown
Departmental Clearance Officer

FROM: Bruce Wagner
Director, National Animal Health Monitoring System

SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection for “National Animal Health Monitoring System; Equine Herpesvirus Study”

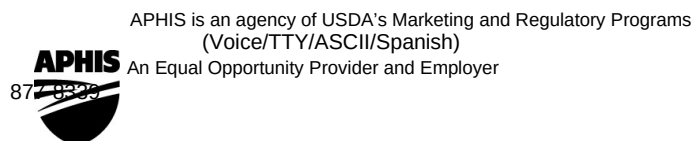
The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is preparing to submit to OMB an information collection request for a regular 3-year approval for an “Equine Herpesvirus Study”. The 60-day Federal Register Notice is currently in approval channels for publication.

However, an unanticipated event has occurred with the recent outbreak of equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) in Florida and Utah. It is therefore essential to the Agency’s mission of animal health protection to prevent the spread of this disease by collecting data for determining risk factors associated with this disease to avoid future outbreaks in other States.

Industry associations such as American Horse Council and American Association of Equine Practitioners have requested APHIS’ assistance with the collection of data to identify risk factors for the development of EHM. The first horse with EHM in the Florida outbreak was detected on February 17, 2013 and as of the week of March 3 there has been a second case of EHM identified along with 6 additional horses infected with EHV-1. This emergency information collection activity will be used to:

- Understand the risk factors for EHM;
- Make recommendations for disease control; and
- Provide guidance on the best ways to avoid future outbreaks based on a thorough analysis of the data.

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Approval to collect this information is needed immediately to allow collection of data before horses and their owners disperse. It is critical that survey data be collected as close to the outbreak as possible to enhance the likelihood for voluntary cooperation in the study and to reduce the likelihood of recall bias. At this point in time we anticipate if all owners/trainers of case and control horses agree to participate in the study that we would collect data on 25 cases and controls for each State. This number could change as the outbreak is not yet resolved. Based on the need to collect data close to the time of the outbreak, we are requesting emergency approval by March 25, 2013.

APHIS will resubmit this collection for a 3-year approval following the publication and close of the Federal Register notice comment period.

Thank you for your time and consideration.