



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Washington, DC
20250

TO: Cortney Higgins
Office of Management and Budget Desk Officer

THROUGH: Ruth Brown
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FROM: Greg Ibach
Under Secretary
Marketing and Regulatory Programs

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10.6-2020

Kevin Shea
Administrator
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

ANTHONY SHEA

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Burke L. Healey
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SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection for Reporting Requirements – SARS-CoV-2

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is requesting an emergency six-month approval for epidemiological reporting of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Approval to collect this information is needed immediately to monitor the unanticipated pandemic of the SARS-CoV-2 emerging disease and its effects in the North American animal population.

Data collection will occur in coordination with the National Animal Health Reporting System¹ (NAHRS) OMB Control number 0579-0299, expiration October 31, 2022, an ongoing information collection process within APHIS.

APHIS' main mission is the prevention, control, and eradication of animal diseases to safeguard animal health. Disease detection and prevention is the most effective method for maintaining a healthy animal population and for enhancing the United States' ability to compete globally in animal and animal product trade. APHIS determined that in this situation traditional information collection and rulemaking procedures could further cause public harm, is contrary to the public interest, and that there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553.

¹ See the homepage for the NAHRS program:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/monitoring-and-surveillance/sa_disease_reporting/ct_info_for_participants.

Ms. Higgins

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The NAHRS program is designed to provide summary information on the presence or absence of reportable animal diseases in the United States. The program collects data from participant States on the presence of listed diseases in livestock, poultry, and aquaculture species that have been observed in the State with a high level of certainty. SARS-CoV-2 is currently on the list of reportable diseases that State officials report on each month.

The main objectives behind collecting additional SARS-CoV-2 data through the NAHRS system is to further our understanding of the disease in animals while meeting our World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) reporting obligations. Reports of emerging and OIE-listed diseases occurring in the United States are required for membership in the OIE and meet international trade reporting requirements for animal health. The data collected from member countries are available at the OIE website World Animal Health Information Database (WAHIS)². Information about SARS-CoV-2 and other emerging diseases is used by OIE member and nonmember countries to better understand the disease and enhance the world's capacity for response to such crises.³

Furthermore, because SARS-CoV-2 is zoonotic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a duty under Section 8319 of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 to collaborate and coordinate with Department of Health and Human Services partners in its surveillance.⁴ Collection and dissemination of animal and poultry health data and information is mandated by 7 U.S.C. 391, the Animal Industry Act of 1884, which established the precursor of the APHIS, Veterinary Services, Bureau of Animal Industry. Legal requirements for examining and reporting on animal disease control methods are further mandated by 21 U.S.C. 119, "Agents to Examine and Report on Methods of Treatment of Animals, and Means for Suppression of Diseases," amended February 7, 1928.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

² More information on the World Animal Health reporting may be found at the OIE's website:

https://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Wahidhome/Home

³ <https://mailchi.mp/oie.int/the-oies-role-in-global-efforts-to-combat-covid-19>

⁴ <https://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=116&page=674>