

OMB Information Collection Supporting Statement
ARS Animal Health National Program Assessment Survey Form
0518-0042

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collections. Attach a copy if the appropriate section of each status and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) research covers the span of nutrition, food safety and quality, animal and plant production and protection, and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems and is organized into fifteen National Programs addressing specific areas of this research. Research in the Agency is conducted through coordinated National Programs on a five-year cycle as described below. This cycle ensures that ARS research meets OMB's Research and Development Investment Criteria and other external requirements, including the Research Title of the Farm Bill, and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). These National Programs serve to bring coordination, communication, and empowerment to approximately 660 research projects carried out by ARS and focus on the relevance, impact, and quality of ARS research. The requested voluntary electronic evaluation survey will give the beneficiaries of ARS research the opportunity to provide input on the impact of the ARS Animal Health National Program. For the purpose of this National Program Assessment, impact is defined as research that has influenced or will significantly influence the area covered by the National Program; has created or will create information, best practices, and/or economic opportunities for the National Program's customers, partners, and stakeholders; or has enabled or will enable action and regulatory agencies to formulate policies and regulations to support American agriculture. The report and evaluation form will be available online through a dedicated URL. The input provided through the completion of the evaluation form will be shared with customers, partners, and stakeholders as part of each National Program's assessment process.

The ARS has 15 National Programs, each of which are assessed every five years on a rotating basis as part of ARS' National Program planning cycle to ensure the relevance, quality, and impact of ARS research. The five-year national program cycle ends with a retrospective assessment to determine the impact of the national program. The next cycle begins with receiving input from stakeholders and partners on research priorities. Reaching out broadly to as many stakeholders and partners as possible in an efficient manner that ensures inclusiveness is paramount.

Although the exact process for the retrospective assessment varies by the nature of the National Program, all include the following four stages:

1. Conducting an in-house program assessment and documenting research accomplishments and/or progress for presentation to external reviewers;

2. Conducting an external review of accomplishments and/or progress, based on the preceding documentation, focused on the research's relevance, quality, and impact;
3. Recording the results of the review; and
4. Informing ARS leadership of evaluation results.

The first stage above captures the results of the internal assessment by developing a written report of accomplishments from research conducted during the previous five years. The methodology used for the second stage varies by national program. One of the methods used by ARS is an internet-based national survey to enable the extensive distribution of the retrospective assessment report to hundreds of stakeholders, who then assess the impact the national program by completing the survey. This survey information is then compiled into a report that is widely shared with stakeholders, partners, and ARS Administrators.

The survey is also used to engage stakeholders and partners and seek their input on research priorities for the next five-year national program research cycle.

This survey has previously been used by two of the ARS National Programs: Animal Health multiple times and Food Animal Production in 2021. Moving forward, the Animal Health National Program will continue to use the survey for stakeholder and partner input.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

An electronic survey has been prepared by the ARS Office of National Programs to reach out to as many of the customers, partners, and stakeholders of the Animal Health National Program as possible. The purpose of the survey is to assess the impact of the research in the current National Program cycle and ensure relevance for the next cycle. This survey has been used several times by the Animal Health National Program, for which the information gathered was analyzed in assessing impact of the research done in the previous cycle and identifying changes needed for upcoming research.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means to the collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The questionnaire is an electronic survey that can only be completed on-line through a dedicated URL. The software selected for this survey, Survey Monkey, will allow the efficient analysis of information provided by a diverse group of customers with varied needs representing various agricultural producers and businesses, scientists

representing universities throughout the United States, the private sector, and action and regulatory agencies in Federal and State agencies that are the beneficiaries of the research conducted by the ARS Animal Health National Program.

4. Describe any efforts to identify duplication, show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use of the purpose described Item 2 above.

ARS National Program Assessments are for research projects planned as part of a 5-year program cycle. There is no other known tracking system for our customers to assess the impact of our research.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 82-I), describe any methods to minimize the burden.

The information collected will have no economic impact on small businesses or small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Failure to collect input from our customers on the impact of our research program would significantly inhibit the relevance and credibility of the research conducted at ARS.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to Guidelines 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances for the collection of information requirements.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside Agency.

A Federal Register notice was published on March 3, 2022, Volume 87, pages 12075-12076. One comment was received as a result of the Federal Register notice. The comment was received on March 7, 2022, from Jean Public who is not in favor of any ARS research and that no taxpayer's dollars should go to this agency.

ARS did discuss the survey with Timothy Sullivan, USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture; Paul Plummer, Iowa State University and Amy Hendrickson, American Sheep Industry Association. Please see their statements below.

1. Timothy Sullivan, National Program Leader for Animal Health and Aquaculture, USDA NIFA, Email address: timothy.sullivan@usda.gov, Phone number 816-527-5434

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) serves as the external funding agency of the Department of Agriculture. USDA NIFA works with partners around the country to administer and support research, extension, and education opportunities that address critical issues facing the viability, development, and expansion of U.S. agriculture for the benefit of producers and consumers. The USDA NIFA Animal Health program supports basic and applied research ranging from cellular, molecular, and genome levels up to whole animal aspects of animal health and disease. This research produces fundamental knowledge in immunology, virology, bacteriology, diagnostics, vaccinology, and treatment development. In targeting animal health program area priorities to meet the current and future needs of stakeholders it is imperative that a mechanism be in place to allow for diverse and comprehensive stakeholder input. This is especially true of a mechanism that allows for quantitative analysis of feedback and not just qualitative assessment. The ARS Animal Health Survey meets these engagement needs exactly.

The survey allows for animal health needs to be expressed across the entire range of domestic animal production systems in a convenient and transparent way. It also easily allows for both broad and targeted analysis. USDA NIFA uses these results to set priorities and improve program fit over each 5-year period for all our animal health programs. This makes the survey itself vital for our animal health operations and USDA NIFA's capacity to support innovation in animal health and to protect U.S. food production.

2. Paul Plummer, Professor and Anderson Endowed Chair of Veterinary Science, College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University, 2426 Lloyd Vet Med, Ames IA, 50011. Email address: Pplummer@iastate.edu. Phone 515-294-8522

The Animal Health Survey is a critically important mechanism for engaging the livestock producers, veterinarians and other stakeholders in the prioritization of disease processes that would benefit the most from research investment. While a number of different mechanisms to prioritize diseases could be envisioned (ie, prevalence of disease, impact on trade, mortality rate, or regulatory importance) the engagement with the stakeholders through this survey helps to tease out the nuance and allows for a more multi-criteria decision making process based on perceived value of those most impacted. Previous surveys have been well designed and implemented. With the development of new virtual online collaboration and consensus building tools that has occurred over the last several years it would be worth considering how these could be leveraged in future surveys to engage stakeholders even more.

3. Amy Hendrickson, Consultant, American Sheep Industry Association, 9785 Maroon Circle, Suite 360, Englewood, CO, 80112. Email address Amy@sheepusa.org. Phone 303-771-3500

This survey is very important to the sheep industry. It really helps us know where concerns are in the industry but also helps identify emerging animal health issues. We feel that it is a very useful tool that ensures federal research is targeted toward meeting the needs and concerns of the industry. Our industry relies on this information. With regard to the survey, it might be worthwhile to add some additional text boxes so that answers can be explained. This may make the survey more useful to ARS and to those completing the survey, and help identify other emerging concerns.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment of gift was or will be provided to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The confidentiality of information received by Office of National Programs is consistent with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Questions of a sensitive nature are not applicable to this information collection. The questions in the electronic survey deal entirely with the performance and impact of the Animal Health National Program.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

The estimated annual burden is 104 hours

	No. Responses /Respondent	Total No. Respondents annually	Minutes per response	Total Hours
Respondents	400	400	15 minutes	100
Non-respondents	200	200	1 minute	4
Total	600	600		104

Recent experience has provided the data for calculating the number of surveys sent out per National Program and the response rate. The estimated hours are based on the length of the survey. It is expected that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey/questionnaire. See copy of survey questions.

The wage rate (Animal Scientists and Public Relations and Fundraising Managers) was based on data from the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment and Wages – May 2021 at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ocwage.pdf>. An approximately equal number of university scientists and trade/science association representatives will be completing this survey. Based on median hourly wages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Animal Scientists (\$38.65) and Public Relations and Fundraising Managers (\$63.85), an average hourly wage rate of \$51 was used.

To account for fringe benefits, we used the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) (2022). Fringe markup is from the following BLS release: Employer Costs for Employee Compensation news release text; For release 10:00 am (EDT) Friday, March 18, 2022 (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf>). BLS reported that for civilian workers, fringe benefits accounted for 40.35 percent of total compensation and wages accounted for the remaining 59.65 percent. To calculate the loaded hourly wage for each occupation, we divided the mean hourly wage by 59.65 percent. Accordingly, the loaded wage rate is $\$51 / .5965 = \85.50

The total estimated cost to respondents is the loaded wage rate X total hours = \$8,892.00.

13. Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record-Keepers

There are no capital and start-up, or operation, maintenance and purchase costs associated with this information collection.

14. Annualized Costs to the Federal Government.

The wage rate (GS-11, \$35.91) was based on data from the OPM Salary Table 2022-DCB for the Baltimore Washington area:
https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2022/DCB_h.pdf.

The estimated time to extract information from the software (Survey Monkey) is 5 hours. The total estimated cost to the Federal Government is the wage rate X total hours = \$179.55.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of OMB Form 83-I.

There was no change or adjustments reported.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

Information will be reported based on queries via the ARS online database search page.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the Information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The Office of National Programs is not seeking approval to exempt display of the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified Item 19 “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”

There are no exceptions to Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.