



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection for Conducting a Case-Control Study on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Poultry 2022

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is submitting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) an information collection request for an emergency 6-month approval for a case control survey of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) infection on poultry farms. Poultry producers need this information immediately to mitigate risk for this environmentally hardy foreign animal disease with unprecedented distribution in wild birds' migration flyways across the United States. Mortality losses from this pathogen are high, creating significant economic losses for poultry producers and expenses for American taxpayers. For example, of the 40 million birds affected by HPAI in 2022, approximately 78% (31 million) are commercial table egg layers and breeder birds. To date, APHIS has made an estimated \$100 million in indemnity payments to table egg layer farms alone. Vaccination for this pathogen is not feasible at this time due to devastating international trade implications. Therefore, the best option for APHIS and poultry producers is to identify risk factors and develop mitigation strategies based on these factors to limit future impacts.

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 has determined that in this situation, traditional information collection and rulemaking procedures could further

cause public harm, are contrary to the public interest, and that there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553.

Between February and June 2022, APHIS mobilized over 1,125 employees to respond to HPAI. Nearly \$800 million in emergency funding has been authorized to address indemnity, diagnostics, field activities, and other response costs. Despite the significant burden of this pathogen on poultry operations, there is much to be learned about preventive measures. Therefore, to limit additional flocks becoming infected in 2022 and beyond, is it critical for APHIS to develop information on the potential sources of new HPAI infections.

As the spring and summer season of HPAI winds down, APHIS has plans in place to immediately gather data in August 2022 to identify risk factors and mitigate future outbreaks. This information is needed as quickly as September, when the fall season of wild bird migration begins, and risk of new infections increases. APHIS will collect data via in-person surveys. APHIS will identify potential study participants from affected and unaffected poultry producers as stored in our Emergency Management Response System (EMRS).

To develop the prevention and control recommendations that poultry producers need, APHIS needs to identify differences in management practices, environmental conditions, and flock and barn-level factors between affected and unaffected flocks. This information is a critical component to develop desperately needed science-based prevention and control measures to stem further economic losses, protect the poultry industry, and secure our domestic and global food system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.