Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

National Agricultural Statistics Service

August 2026

For more information on this and previous NAHMS equine studies, scan the QR code.

Greetings!

In approximately one week, you will receive a request in the mail to fill out a questionnaire for an important national study, the Equine 2026 study, that is being conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The study will provide valuable data that will benefit equine owners, managers, and the entire equine industry by:

- Guiding future research and education to benefit equine health,
- Describing trends in equine care, health management, and disease occurrence over time,
- Describing use and availability of equine veterinary services, and
- Describing preparedness for emergencies and natural disasters affecting equines.

You are one of the few equine owners/operators selected to participate in this study, and your answers will represent many other equine owners/operators like you. Your voluntary participation is essential to this important study. We are required by law to keep your answers confidential, and your responses on the surveys will be used only in combination with other responses.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting this valuable study. It is only with the generous help of people like you that the Equine 2026 study can be successful. To help you prepare, we have included more information about the study in the accompanying documents. We have also included some informational handouts that we hope you will find interesting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-888-424-7828.

Sincerely,

Sarah Blasko
Acting Director, Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health
Veterinary Services, USDA-APHIS-NAHMS

Lance Honig
Chair, Agricultural Statistics Board
USDA-NASS

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both. This survey is conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: https://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality. Response is voluntary.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB number is 0579-0269. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 8 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden statement or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to APHIS.PRA@usda.gov.

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NAHMS Equine 2026 Study
Study Launch

August 2025

Overview

In 2026, the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) will launch its fourth national equine study. Equine 2026 will take an in-depth look at U.S. equine operations and events and will provide industry with new and valuable information regarding trends in equine health and welfare.

NAHMS studies are:

- National in scope
- Science-based
- Statistically valid
- Collaborative
- Voluntary
- Confidential

Study Focus

For the 2026 study, NAHMS asked equine owners, industry stakeholders, and government officials to provide input and define the information needs of the equine industry.

During this process, six study objectives were identified:

- Describe trends in equine care, health management, and disease occurrence over time, based on data from 1998, 2005, 2015, and 2026.
- Describe biosecurity and health management strategies related to the control of important equine infectious diseases at equine events and on farms.
- Describe use of equine veterinary services and equine owner perceptions about availability of veterinary services for equids.
- Describe issues surrounding equids that are at-risk (an equid that has an increased possibility of experiencing neglect, abuse, or poor welfare), and/or in transition (transitioning from one home, vocation, opportunity, or owner to the next).
- Describe owner preparedness for emergencies and natural disasters affecting equids.
- Estimate the prevalence of equine respiratory disease pathogens from environmental samples at equine events.

"Understanding the needs of the horse industry makes the upcoming 2026 NAHMS study critically important for the future. Similar to previous studies in 1998, 2005, and 2015, information garnered from the 2026 study will be used to identify disease prevalence and guide the equine industry in allocating resources for future research, health care, professional services, and natural disasters. Owner input is key to recognizing biosecurity needs and how to prevent infectious diseases. When invited, I urge horse owners to participate."

—Nathaniel A. White II, DVM, MS Diplomate ACVS
Professor Emeritus of Equine Surgery
Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center
Past President of the American
Association of Equine Practitioners

Study Activities

Phase I – Farm Study

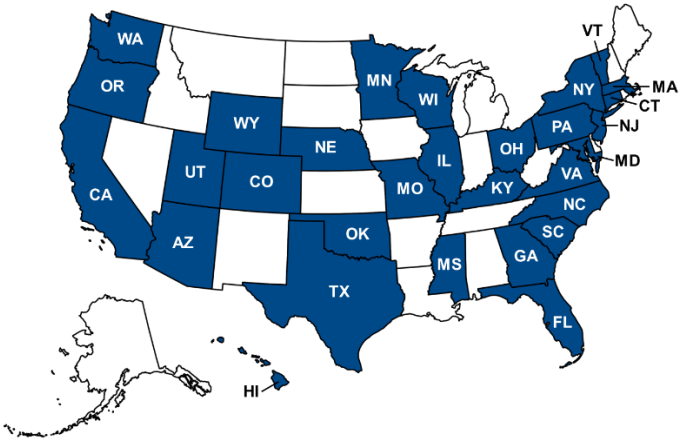
Participation in a NAHMS study is confidential and voluntary. Phase I of the study will include selected operations that have five or more equids[1] and qualify as a farm as defined by the USDA Agricultural Census.[2] In August 2026, representatives from the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will contact selected equine owners in all 50 States to complete a questionnaire.

Phase II – Event Study

Phase II of the study will consist of questionnaires and biologic sampling conducted by USDA's Veterinary Services at equine events in 30 States (see map below). Events studied will represent many breeds, disciplines, and event sizes.

Data from Phase II are expected to provide information about ways to reduce incidence of infectious diseases at events through biosecurity measures and disease monitoring. The goal is to describe best management practices at events to ensure equine health in transient populations exposed to unfamiliar conditions.

Equine 2026 Participating States – Phase II



[1] Horses, ponies, donkeys, mules, and other domestic equine species.

[2] The definition of a farm is a place that could or does actually sell $1,000 of agricultural products annually or that has five or more equids (other than commercial enterprises, such as racetracks).

"The 2005 NAHMS Equine Event study has long been used as an important resource for the horse industry in identifying biosecurity risks and needs for equine events. As we look to the future, the NAHMS Equine 2026 study will provide critical insights into current disease risks and prevention strategies at equine events. The information collected from this study will provide industry experts valuable insights as to the risks and challenges related to infectious diseases at equine events. Ultimately, the results from this study will help direct future efforts for ensuring healthy safe events for our equine athletes.

I strongly encourage everyone to participate in the 2026 NAHMS study, which will only further help us protect and promote equine health at our equine events."

—Katie Flynn, BVMS
Senior Staff Veterinarian
Equine Health and Biosecurity
United States Equestrian Federation (USEF)

Confidentiality

NAHMS relies on voluntary participation. The privacy of every participant is protected. No name or contact information will be associated with individual data, and no data will be reported in a way that could reveal the identity of a participant. Data are presented only in an aggregate manner.

NAHMS is recognized as a statistical unit by the Office of Management and Budget. All information acquired for the NAHMS Equine 2026 study will be used for statistical purposes only and treated as confidential in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA). Data collected under CIPSEA are protected from Freedom of Information requests.

For More Information:

USDA–APHIS–VS–CEAH
NRRC Building B, M.S. 2E7
2150 Centre Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117
Phone: 866-907-8190
E-mail: NAHMS@usda.gov

www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/nahms
#803.1124

Biosecurity On-the-Farm

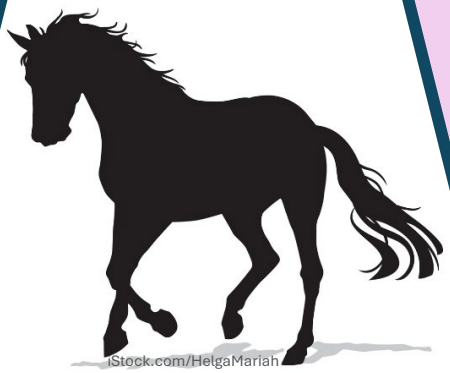
Clean . Safe . Protected

ACCESS

- ✓ Limit contact between animals, people, & wildlife
- ✓ Shared items can spread disease

PEOPLE

- ✓ Establish clear rules and protocols to reduce transmission
- ✓ Limit access to only essential personnel



ANIMALS

- ✓ Isolate horses returning from shows or vet visits
- ✓ Pregnancy can increase vulnerability to infectious disease

ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Use non-porous, cleanable materials
- ✓ Regularly remove feces from fields and paddocks

MOVEMENT

- ✓ Control movement between farm areas
- ✓ Limit co-mingling of non-resident & resident horses

Work with your veterinarian to develop a biosecurity plan for your facility.

American Association of Equine Practitioners General Biosecurity Guidelines

Equine Disease Communication Center Biosecurity

EDCC & Equine Guelph Biosecurity Risk Calculator Tool

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Created by: Brandy A. Burgess, DVM, MSc, PhD, DACVIM (LA), DACVPM
College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, Athens GA

Salmonellosis

iStock.com/MariaLorenaMendozaSartii

Salmonella Infections in Horses

- *Salmonella* is common in horses and can result in diarrhea and colic.
- Sometimes, horses with *Salmonella* do not have any symptoms, but can still be contagious.
- Stress increases the likelihood that a horse will shed *Salmonella*. Sources of stress may include transportation, changing diets, or illness.

How Does *Salmonella* Spread?

- *Salmonella* spreads through contaminated feces.
- It can spread from horses to cause disease in humans (called a zoonotic disease).
- Anything in a horse's environment can potentially be contaminated.
- Flies and other insects may spread the bacteria from surface to surface.

How can you reduce the risk of *Salmonella* in horses?

- ✓ WASH YOUR HANDS! Do this even if you wear gloves while working around your horse. It reduces the chance of spreading *Salmonella* or other germs.
- ✓ If possible, house sick horses in stalls with cleanable surfaces (e.g., sealed concrete rather than sand or dirt).
- ✓ DON'T SHARE! Buckets, tack, and cleaning tools should not be shared between healthy and unhealthy horses. Provide your horse with its own feed and water buckets and do not feed horses on the ground.
- ✓ Scrub the wall's and floor of your horse's stall regularly with a detergent and always clean shared trailers before use.
- ✓ ISOLATE new horses and horses that have been hospitalized or are returning from an event at their arrival in case they are carrying an infectious disease such as *Salmonella*.

Research indicates that stablemates of infected horses are less likely to become infected with Salmonella when proper precautions are taken to reduce transmission.

The Center for Food Security & Public Health Disease Information *Salmonella*

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention About *Salmonella* Infection

Equine Disease Communication Center Salmonellosis

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Created by: Brandy A. Burgess, DVM, MSc, PhD, DACVIM (LA), DACVPM
College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, Athens GA

The Nose Knows!

Recognizing Respiratory Disease in Horses

Does your horses nose look like this?

NO?!?!

Your horse may be showing signs of developing respiratory disease.

Watery or snotty nasal discharge can be a sign of respiratory illness.

iStock.com/TuracNovruzova

Separate sick horses from others & use separate equipment.

Check your horse for an elevated temperature (>101.5°F or >38.6°C).

Horses may sneeze or cough when they have respiratory illness.

iStock.com/Priyanka gupta

Call your veterinarian if your horse is in distress and ask for medical advice.

Equine Disease Communication Center Equine Influenza

American Association of Equine Practitioners Respiratory Disease Guidelines

Equine Disease Communication Center Equine Herpes Virus

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Created by: Brandy A. Burgess, DVM, MSc, PhD, DACVIM (LA), DACVPM
College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, Athens GA