



NAHMS Equine Needs Assessment: An Evaluation of Industry and Owner Concerns to Help Guide Future NAHMS Studies

Information Brief

2024

Introduction

From August 1, 2023 to October 1, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) conducted an equine needs assessment survey to identify critical information needs regarding equine health and management for the 2026 NAHMS Equine study. NAHMS encouraged individuals involved in all aspects of the equine industry to provide their input on equine management priorities, welfare priorities, and health concerns. A total of 1,430 individuals and 87 leaders from selected groups, including the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Horse Council, and government employees, completed the survey. Findings from the survey will help NAHMS ensure the maximum benefit and success of the study and may also help inform others working to meet the information needs of the equine industry.

Results

Respondents ranked their top three priorities in four categories: management issues, welfare/economics, health problems, and pathogens. After responses were weighted, “unwanted horses and resources for distressed horse owners” was the number one priority among the listed management/welfare items (Figure 1), with use and availability of veterinarians ranked second, and biosecurity ranked third. After responses were weighted, concern for equine herpesvirus (EHV) and equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) was the number one priority selected from the health problem and pathogen options (Figure 2), with lameness ranked as a second priority.

Figure 1: Top 10 Management/Welfare Concerns and Priorities Ranked by Points

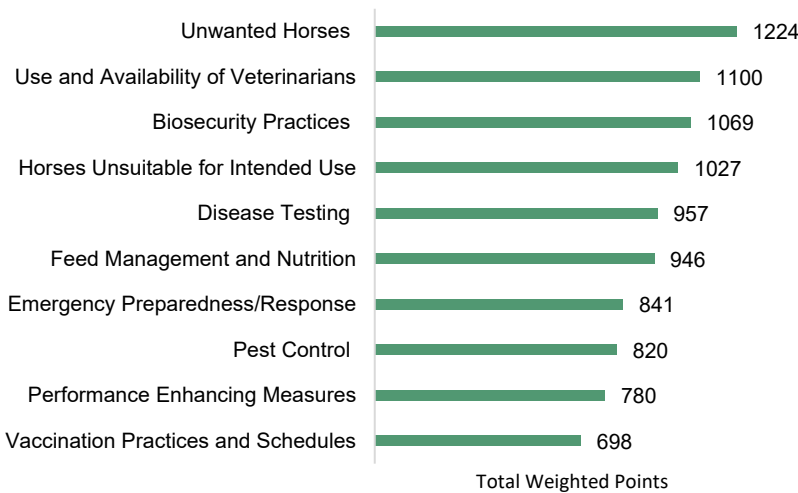
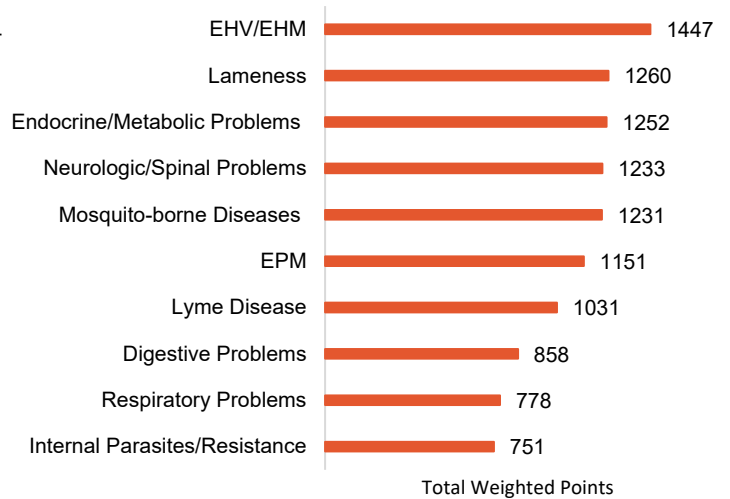


Figure 2: Top 10 Health Problem and Pathogen Priorities Ranked by Points



Conclusion

This survey was open to anyone who wished to participate, and results are not meant to be representative of all equine stakeholders. Nonetheless, the results highlight important issues and disease concerns within the equine industry that will benefit from further attention and research. This information, along with discussions at industry meetings, reviews of scientific literature, and discussions with experts in academia and research, will be used to prioritize NAHMS Equine study objectives. Prior to the start of the study, NAHMS will publish a request for information collection to the Federal Register for public comment. For more information, please visit:

www.aphis.usda.gov/nahms.