

NAHMS Equine 2026 Study Study Launch

November 2024

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

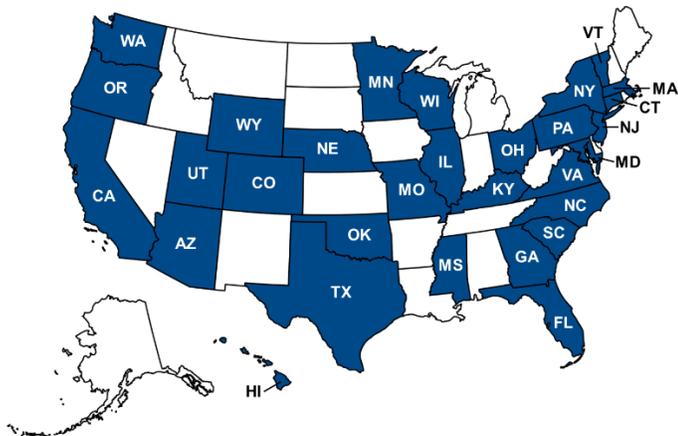
Participation in a NAHMS study is confidential and voluntary. Phase I of the study will include selected operations that have five or more equids¹ and qualify as a farm as defined by the USDA Agricultural Census.² In February 2026, representatives from the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (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) throughout 2026. 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

Because 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:

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