

National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) to Study Goat Industry in 2009

In its first study of the U.S. goat industry, NAHMS will obtain baseline information about the U.S. goat population, including health issues, prevalence of certain diseases, and health and management practices. The study will focus primarily on the meat and dairy sectors of the goat industry.

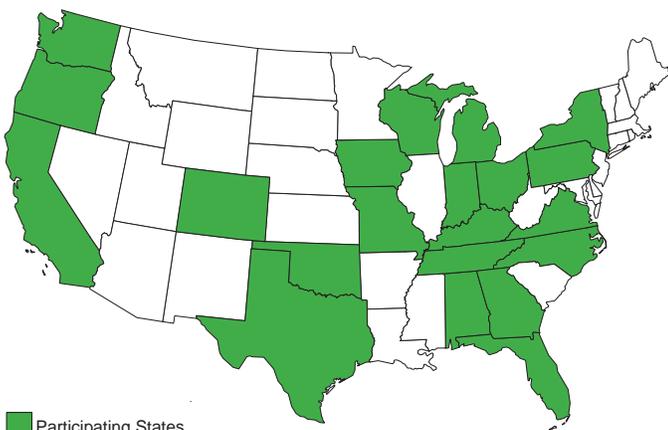
A unit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), NAHMS was established in 1990 to conduct national studies on the health and management of the U.S. livestock, poultry, and aquaculture populations.

NAHMS Goat 2009 study

The NAHMS Goat 2009 study will address the priority issues of the U.S. goat industry and other stakeholders. These priority issues were developed from 1,264 responses to a needs-assessment questionnaire and input from meetings across the country with representatives of the goat industry.

Twenty-one of the major goat-producing States will participate in Goat 2009 (see map). These States represent 75.5 percent of U.S. goat operations and 82.2 percent of U.S. goats.

NAHMS Goat 2009 Study



NAHMS, in collaboration with domestic and global partners, will address the following objectives in the Goat 2009 study.

- Provide a baseline description of animal health, nutrition, and management practices in the U.S. goat industry.
- Determine producer awareness of VS program diseases.
- Describe producer-reported occurrence of infectious diseases (including brucellosis, scrapie, caprine arthritis encephalitis, Johne's disease, and caseous lymphadenitis) and the management and biosecurity practices important for controlling them.
- Describe practices important for controlling internal parasites and reducing anthelmintic resistance.
- Determine producer awareness of sore mouth (contagious ecthyma) and practices to prevent its transmission.

The objectives will be achieved in collaboration with domestic and global partners, including universities and other federal agencies.

Benefits to the industry

By gathering reliable and valuable information on the U.S. goat industry, the Goat 2009 study will help to

- Educate the producers and veterinarians of tomorrow,
- Help policymakers and industry representatives make informed decisions,
- Measure the impacts of disease,
- Evaluate the potential impacts of diseases affecting both goats and humans,
- Assist researchers and private enterprises to identify and focus on vital issues related to goat health and productivity, and
- Conduct economic analyses of the health and productivity of the U.S. goat industry.

Study schedule

In the first phase of this study, representatives from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will contact randomly selected goat producers from July through mid-August 2009 to administer an on-site questionnaire. * After voluntarily completing the questionnaire, producers will be given a second, shorter questionnaire to complete and mail back in a business-reply envelope. This second phase of the study might include biological sampling, and producers will receive additional information then about the sampling options.

Benefits to participants

All goat producers who participate in the first phase of the study will receive reports and information sheets presenting the study results; these materials will enable each producer to compare his or her operation—including management decisions and practices—with other U.S. goat operations. These publications will present study data on national, regional, and operation-size bases for general management and production topics as well as specific health-related issues.

If funding becomes available, the study will include biological sampling components; producers choosing to participate will receive results that

could help guide management practices. These potential testing options will provide

- Information about internal parasites in the herd and their resistance to anthelmintics, which could help improve deworming protocols;
- Sample results that will help producers evaluate whether their herd has Johne's disease; and/or
- Information on strain(s) of sore mouth present on the operation.

Confidentiality

Because NAHMS' studies rely on voluntary participation, USDA-APHIS protects the privacy of every participant. Only those collecting the data know the identity of the respondent. No participant name or address is ever recorded in any APHIS database. No data will be reported on any individual or in a manner that would allow the identification of an individual.

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*Operations with fewer than 10 goats at time of sample selection will follow a different process that will involve completing only a short questionnaire by mail or, if preferred, by follow-up telephone call. This process also is voluntary and strictly confidential.