

NAHMS Sheep Needs Assessment An Evaluation of Industry Concerns to Help Guide Future NAHMS

Information Brief

November 2021

INTRODUCTION

The sheep needs assessment survey was administered to identify critical information needs regarding sheep management and health for the USDA National Animal Health Monitoring System’s (NAHMS) Sheep study, planned for 2024. The survey gathered opinions from a wide variety of stakeholders regarding sheep management and health priorities, industry burdens, and participation incentives. The sheep needs assessment survey was an online questionnaire administered from January 31- March 31, 2021 that was distributed via email lists, newsletters, social media, and sheep industry groups, including breed, fiber, dairy, meat, and show associations. All individuals involved in the sheep industry were encouraged to participate, regardless of sheep ownership. Responses from 1,096 individuals, representing all sectors of the industry and all 50 States, were received.

RESULTS

All respondents were asked to rank the top three management priorities and the top three disease, disorder, or pathogen priorities they would like to see as focus areas in the NAHMS Sheep study. After responses were weighted, ewe health was the number one priority among the listed management items (figure 1). Marketing was ranked second and was the number one choice for 15.9 percent of all respondents. After responses were weighted, concern for internal parasites was by far the number one priority selected from the disease, disorder, and pathogen options (figure 2). Lameness was ranked second priority for respondents.

Figure 1. Top 10 management priorities ranked by total weighted points

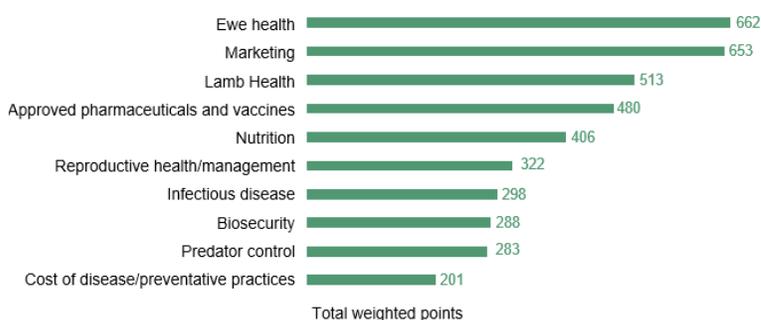
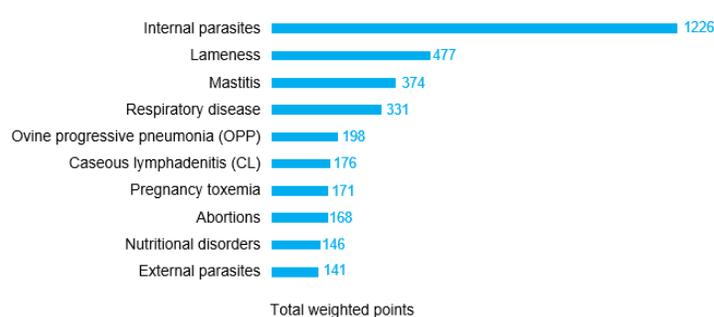


Figure 2. Top 10 disease, disorder, or pathogen priorities ranked by total weighted points



NAHMS recognizes that producer time is valuable, and NAHMS studies aim to provide valuable information back to producers through their participation in national studies. The needs assessment identified that parasite and anthelmintic testing were the favored incentives among respondents, which directly relates to the prioritization of internal parasites as a top priority disease.

CONCLUSION

These results highlight important issues and disease concerns for the sheep industry. This information, along with discussions at industry meetings, reviews of scientific literature, and discussions with sheep researchers will be used to prioritize NAHMS Sheep study objectives. The objectives will be determined 18 months before study launch. Additionally, this information may be used by other stakeholders to further meet the needs of the sheep industry. Prior to the start of the study, NAHMS will publish a request for information collection of this study to the Federal Register for public comment. For more information please visit: <http://nahms.aphis.usda.gov>