



INTRODUCTION

Some States record/collect information on premises within their State in information management systems other than the Emergency Management Response System 2.0 (EMRS2). However, EMRS2 is the APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) system of record for animal health incidents in the United States. Having accurate premises data in EMRS2, prior to an incident, significantly facilitates response efforts and allows resources to be devoted to other critical information management tasks during an outbreak.

In preparation for an animal health incident, States may request that premises data are imported into EMRS2 so that information is available to assist response operations in the event of an outbreak. USDA APHIS Veterinary Services (VS)/EMRS provides a manageable and secure central information system that is available, ready, and has been proven successful. From the USDA APHIS perspective, having premises data in EMRS2 prior to an incident is strongly preferred to importing it during a response, though it is possible to do the latter as required.

IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE DATA

A national Premises Identification Number (PIN) is required in EMRS2. An accurate premises data set has a valid 911 address and a set of matching coordinates (latitude and longitude). These data reflect the *actual location* of the front gate leading to the animals on the premises. It is critical to have the exact physical location of animals for response activities. Using mailing addresses or personal residence addresses is extremely problematic. First, it may be difficult to locate the animals. Second, the address may or may not be in the same zone or area as the animals on the premises. During an outbreak, time spent tracking down physical animal locations is valuable time lost.

STATE DATA

Under State authority, there has been a wide variation in how States have managed premises identification and collection of premises data. Some States allow the self-registration of premises, while others allow users to change their information. In many cases, producers register a residence or mailing address instead of the physical location of the animal premises. While this may not pose a problem for the State(s), this type of data is not compatible with response requirements, which include that the physical location of the animals to be entered in EMRS2. Subsequently and problematically, the national allocator—when queried with an existing PIN—will pull an address different from the one that has been entered and edited. Therefore, in order to successfully import premises into EMRS2, all premises data must be verified to ensure that the data being entered into EMRS2 is accurate and appropriate.

IMPORTING DATA

As stated, USDA APHIS VS/EMRS2 is ready and able to import premises data from States; a number of methods are available to complete the process. In some States, it is possible to directly access the State database and query the system using an existing tool. However, in many States, information technology capabilities and security issues make this direct access and query process difficult. Nevertheless, premises data can still be imported into EMRS2 if the State provides a file with three elements: PIN (if assigned), 911 address, and front gate coordinates for where the animals are located.

Once the State provides this information, there are two key stages to import the data. First, a spot check is conducted in a mapping application to ensure that the majority of the premises appear to have valid 911 addresses and matching coordinates entered for the animal location, rather than other types of addresses. Second, raw records are imported into EMRS2; a number of processes then validate the imported information and create the records required in EMRS2, such as the premises, animal business, investigation, and others.

While it may seem quick and easy to upload raw, invalidated data from States into EMRS2, this can have serious consequences in an outbreak and ultimately diminish the effectiveness of any response effort. If States are not planning to share premises data prior to an outbreak, a quality assurance program can at least help to ensure that the import process of premises into EMRS2 goes more smoothly; again, sharing premises information prior to an incident is preferred. The amount of time required depends primarily on the accuracy of the existing data as well as personnel available. However, if the PIN is already assigned and the data provided by the State is mostly accurate, then it takes approximately 2 hours to import 5,000 premises into EMRS2.

For more information on importing premises data into EMRS2, please contact Dr. Fred Bourgeois (Fred.G.Bourgeois@usda.gov).