



# NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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## USDA to conduct study on sheep and lamb health and management

**WASHINGTON, Dec. 18, 2023** – This December through July 2024, USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s (APHIS) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) are partnering to conduct a national study focusing on sheep and lamb health and management in the United States. This study, conducted approximately every 10 years, consists of two phases and includes biological sampling and two questionnaires.

“The data collected during this comprehensive survey will be instrumental for informing policy using real and accurate data, identifying economic impacts of sheep diseases, updating Extension programs to target the issues that sheep producers are facing, and prioritizing research to tackle the health and disease issues in the U.S. sheep industry,” said Dr. Natalie Urie, NAHMS sheep 2024 study lead. “Our goal is to identify impacts of common diseases, management and biosecurity practices associated with those diseases, antimicrobial use and resistance patterns, management practices producers use to control internal parasites, and more.”

Producers, industry stakeholders and policy makers will benefit from the benchmark data produced by this survey. Survey results will provide a greater understanding of sheep health status throughout the U.S. and provide valuable insight into management practices and disease preparedness and identify educational needs and opportunities related to sheep health.

“Producers participating in the study will also have opportunities for free and confidential biological sampling of their sheep. This includes sampling fecal egg counts to identify internal parasite issues and swabs to detect pathogens that cause lameness,” said Dr. Alyson Wiedenheft, NAHMS’ biologics coordinator.

NASS has made survey response more convenient and accessible through their online Respondent Portal at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov). On the website, producers can complete their NASS survey, view historical reports and access other resources.

NASS and NAHMS are required by law to keep all information confidential, use the data for statistical purposes only, and publish in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation.

The results will be announced and published at the conclusion of the sheep study. To learn more about the NAHMS sheep study, or see past results, visit

[www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/monitoring-and-surveillance/nahms/nahms\\_sheep\\_studies](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/monitoring-and-surveillance/nahms/nahms_sheep_studies), and follow NASS on X @usda\_nass and APHIS

@USDA\_APHIS.

*NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.*

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