



State of New Jersey

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MEMO

To: Livestock and domestic pet owners
From: Amar Patil, DVM, MVSc, PhD, Dipl. ACVM, Director, Division of Animal Health/State Veterinarian
Date: October 3, 2025

RE: New World Screwworm Update for animal owners

Background

New World screwworm (NWS), *Cochliomyia hominivorax*, is a species of fly found throughout portions of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. NWS is particularly devastating as the fly larvae burrow and feed on living tissue, often causing severe and sometimes fatal damage to animals. NWS can infest any warm-blooded animal, including livestock, companion animals, wildlife, and birds. In 1966, the NWS was eradicated in the United States with a sterile insect program developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This sterile insect program created a barrier zone in Panama, keeping most of North and Central America free from NWS and preventing expansion into the United States. A breakthrough incursion in Central America occurred in 2023, with NWS progressing northward. As of May 2025, NWS has been detected in several Central American countries and Mexico. As Mexico shares a geographic border with the United States, on May 11, 2025, the USDA stopped moving cattle, horses, and bison across the U.S.-Mexico border. On September 21, 2025, the USDA announced a new confirmed NWS case in Sabinas Hidalgo, located in the state of Nuevo León, less than 70 miles from the Texas border. The affected animal was an 8-month-old cow with a history of recent movement from southern Mexico into a feedlot in Nuevo León.

Despite the halt of animal importation between the two countries, NJDA is asking animal owners to remain vigilant for this pest. As animal owners, you play a crucial role in spotting unusual signs early on.

What to look for in your animals that may be an indication of NWS infestation

- Maggots in wounds or other body openings, such as the nose, ears, genitalia, or navel (in newborn animals).
- Wounds that have a bloody discharge or foul odor.
- Wounds that become deeper and larger as the maggots grow and feed on living tissue.
- Animals that have recently given birth, suffered an injury, or undergone a surgical procedure (such as dehorning or branding) are most vulnerable to attracting NWS.
- An animal had a recent travel history or was rescued from Central American countries or Mexico and has any of the above signs.

Immediately Report Signs of NWS

- If the animal had recent travel history from a Central American country or Mexico and has compatible clinical signs suggestive of NWS, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Follow State Livestock and Domestic Pet Importation Regulations

- If traveling with your animal or acquiring an animal from out of state, be sure to evaluate the movement requirements for that animal before shipment or travel. At a minimum, a certificate of veterinary inspection is often required, assuring that an accredited and licensed veterinarian has recently evaluated the animal.

Pet Dogs Imported from a Screwworm-Affected Country

- If your pet dog is coming from a country or region **where screwworm is known to exist, it may enter the United States only** if it is accompanied by a certificate signed by a full-time salaried veterinary official (official government veterinarian) of the region of origin* stating that:
 - The dog has been inspected for screwworm **within 5 days** prior to shipment to the United States; and
 - The dog is either free from screwworm OR
 - The dog was infested with screwworm, held in quarantine, and treated until free from screwworm prior to leaving the region.
- For more information about obtaining a certificate endorsement by an official government veterinarian, contact the Animal Health Competent Authority of the country your pet is traveling from. The Animal Health Competent Authority is the Veterinary Authority or other governmental authority responsible for ensuring the implementation of animal health and welfare measures, including the enforcement of international veterinary certification standards in the country. For additional support in identifying a foreign Animal Health Competent Authority, please visit the links provided on the USDA website: [Bring a Pet Dog into the United States](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/pet-travel/another-country-to-us-import/dogs)
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/pet-travel/another-country-to-us-import/dogs>

Resources for Owners

- USDA APHIS New World Screwworm Webpage – provides information on the current outbreak.
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>
- USDA APHIS September 21, 2025 New World Screwworm Detection Information
 - <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/09/21/mexico-confirms-case-new-world-screwworm-nuevo-leon>.
- New World screwworm – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 - <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/new-world-screwworm/>
- History of the screwworm in the United States
 - <https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/speccoll/exhibits/show/stop-screwworms--selections-fr/introduction>
- USDA Hunter and Outdoor Enthusiasts
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/factsheet-nws-hunters-508.pdf>
- USDA Pest Alert
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pest-alert-new-world-screwworm.pdf>
- CDC – Clinical Overview of New World Screwworm
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/new-world-screwworm/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html>
- FAO NWS Life Cycle
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/screwworm-poster.pdf>