FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
New World Screwworm Surveillance

Updated as of April 2026

New World Screwworm (NWS) Producer Guidance

1. What does a NWS infestation look like?
If an animal is infested with NWS, they may exhibit signs of depression, isolation, head shaking, irritation, or biting and licking at wounds. Producers should examine animals closely for foul odor and small white eggs or larvae around a wound or mucous membrane area of a live animal.

2. What should I do if I suspect a NWS infestation on an animal?
If a NWS infestation is suspected in livestock or pets, call a TAHC region office or on-call veterinarian at 1-800-550-8242. If a NWS infestation is suspected in wildlife, report it to your local Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologist. Find a Wildlife Biologist here: https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/habitat-management/find-a-wildlife-biologist/

3. Who can submit fly or larva samples for official identification?
At this time, only TAHC, USDA, and veterinary practitioners are authorized to submit samples for official confirmation to the national laboratory. Reporting suspicious flies or larvae to TAHC, USDA, or TPWD is critical to ensure the collection and submission process is completed quickly and correctly, leading to an effective and efficient response that will mitigate larger impacts.

4. Can I collect fly or larva samples found in a wound on my animal?
We recommend contacting TAHC as early in the collection process as possible. At this time, only TAHC, USDA, and veterinary practitioners are authorized to submit samples for official confirmation to the national laboratory. This process helps ensure the lab is not overwhelmed with flies and maggots that do not pose a threat.

5. What happens if there is a confirmed case of NWS in Texas?
A confirmed case of NWS in Texas will require an epidemiological evaluation. During the initial hours after a confirmed case, officials will enact existing response plans. Efforts may include deploying trained personnel to help inspect animals, setting NWS specific fly traps for surveillance, providing education to animal owners in the area, and determining where to deploy sterile flies—the only proven eradication method.

6. How will movement restrictions be a containment tool in a NWS infested area?
Animal movement will likely be restricted with specific requirements to leave zones. Meeting animal inspection, treatment, and identification requirements helps TAHC and USDA control the spread of the pest and monitor for additional infestations and helps producers safely continue moving their animals.

7. How should I determine the preventative drugs to use to avoid NWS animal infestations?
Animal drugs, https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/safety-health/animal-drugs-new-world-screwworm, must be approved by the FDA or administered through a veterinary-client relationship to treat or prevent NWS myiasis in animals. Veterinary-client relationships are key to quick and effective treatment of NWS infested animals. Animals infested with NWS should be treated according to their veterinarian's recommendations.

The FDA provides information to support veterinarians, https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/safety-health/new-world-screwworm-information-veterinarians, with identifying FDA-approved animal drugs labeled for indications other than NWS myiasis that scientific literature indicates may be effective to prevent or treat NWS myiasis.

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8. Are there any preventative drugs available for use to avoid NWS infestations?
On August 18, 2025, HHS issued a declaration that enables FDA to issue Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for animal drugs to treat NWS. Several products have been conditionally approved or issued an EUA for preventing or treating NWS infestations. To view the full list of EUAs and Conditional Approvals, visit https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/safety-health/new-world-screwworm-information-veterinarians.

9. What insecticides or pesticides can be used to control NWS?
USDA has developed a list of pesticides, https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pesticides-for-nws.pdf, that are currently registered with the EPA for use against NWS, may have utility against NWS, or have been labeled for the control of flies.

As for all pesticides, please read and follow label directions prior to administration and use.

10. Are there any other preventative measures I can take to prevent NWS infestations?
Producers can take steps to prevent NWS infestations by:
- utilizing fly and tick control methods, including fly sprays and keeping clean conditions;
- repairing equipment and cleaning up brush in environments where animals are, to avoid unnecessary wounds;
- moving wound-inducing practices, such as castration, birthing, and dehorning, to cooler months; and
- getting animals accustomed to regular inspections.

11. What is critical to protect my animals from NWS infestations?
Producers should avoid creating unnecessary wounds, doctor wounds quickly if they occur, and cover and monitor the wound closely until it heals properly.

New World Screwworm (NWS) Fly Surveillance

12. What does NWS fly surveillance look like?
NWS specific fly traps are placed in strategic locations to monitor for the fly. Animal health officials collect suspicious flies from the traps and submit for official identification to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).

13. Why is NWS fly surveillance important?
Fly surveillance helps animal health officials detect NWS flies if they are in the area. NWS fly traps monitor for the pest, adding a layer of surveillance and bolstering early detection for a quick response, if NWS is detected.

14. What do NWS specific fly traps look like?
Currently, animal health officials with TAHC and USDA are utilizing a black trap, 6.5 inches in diameter and 13 inches long, coated with a sticky substance with Swormlure-5 applied as the attractant.

15. How do NWS specific fly traps work?
Adult NWS flies are attracted to Swormlure-5 and stick to the nontoxic sticky surface area. These traps are only utilized to monitor for NWS flies, not reduce populations or stop them from spreading.

16. Are NWS fly traps used to eliminate fly populations in an area?
NWS specific fly traps are only used for surveillance purposes by TAHC and USDA. Swormlure-5 is used as an attractant, and trapped flies are used for official identification of NWS populations in an area.

17. Are insecticides or pesticides used in NWS fly surveillance traps to eliminate fly populations in an area?
NWS specific fly traps are only used for surveillance purposes by TAHC and USDA. At this time, no insecticides or pesticides are EPA approved for elimination of NWS flies in fly traps.

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18. Can I conduct my own fly surveillance using NWS fly traps?
No. It is not recommended for individuals to place their own traps. Trap locations and attractants are carefully selected and closely monitored to ensure optimal effectiveness and quick detection by animal health officials.

19. What happens if a wild NWS fly is detected through fly surveillance traps?
If NWS is detected through laboratory confirmation, TAHC and USDA will quickly evaluate and determine if there is a NWS population in the area. Response efforts to contain, control, and eradicate will be enacted, as appropriate.

New World Screwworm (NWS) Animal Surveillance

20. What does NWS animal surveillance look like?
NWS animal surveillance consists of inspecting animals for wounds, maggots in living tissue, and clinical signs of NWS myiasis.

21. Who should be conducting NWS animal surveillance?
Animal owners and livestock producers should conduct general animal surveillance on their own animals regularly. Anyone around animals, including wildlife, domestic animals, or other warm-blooded creatures, should monitor for open wounds or signs of possible NWS infestations. TAHC will conduct animal surveillance to identify potentially impacted animals if NWS is detected in the state.

22. How does NWS animal surveillance work?
NWS animal surveillance improves early detection, allowing veterinarians to help the animal avoid devastating impacts and promote quick containment of the NWS population through response activities.

23. Why is NWS animal surveillance important?
Animals infested with NWS, myiasis, or secondary infection, left untreated, may die within one week of infestation. Additionally, infested wounds and the presence of maggots on living animals is often the first indication of NWS in an area.

24. What are the animal health officials' roles in NWS animal surveillance?
TAHC staff regularly monitor for indications of animal disease and pests during routine regulatory duties. If NWS is detected in Texas, TAHC responders will conduct animal surveillance in infested zones to help determine the spread, prevent additional spread, and share resources with animal owners.

25. What happens if NWS is detected through animal surveillance?
TAHC and USDA will quickly evaluate and determine if there is a NWS population in the area and enact response plans. Response plans can include enforcing animal movement requirements to move animals outside of an infested zone, evaluating for sterile insect distribution needs, and prioritizing stopping the spread while maintaining continuity of animal agriculture business.

26. Where can I find more information?
Producers can learn more about NWS in:
- Livestock from TAHC: https://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency/nws.html
- Wildlife from TPWD: https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/screwworm/
- Humans from DSHS: https://www.dshs.texas.gov/notifiable-conditions/zoonosis-control/zoonosis-control-diseases-and-conditions/new-world-screwworm