



Steve Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Christina L. Waggett
Assistant Commissioner for
Consumer Protection

Michael P. Martin, DVM
State Veterinarian

July 13, 2026

New World Screwworm in the United States

On June 3, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of a New World screwworm (NWS) in a 3-week-old calf in Zavala County, Texas. Larvae were identified in the umbilical area. Since the initial detection several additional cases have been confirmed leading to several infested zones in Texas and New Mexico.

New World screwworm (NWS, *Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a serious pest that affects livestock, pets, wildlife, and, less commonly, people and birds. Adult NWS flies can look very similar to houseflies, and the larvae (maggots) require laboratory identification to tell apart from our native fly maggots. The NWS larvae feed on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals and they can cause extensive damage by feeding on healthy tissue. The adult fly is attracted to a wound or mucosal area to lay her eggs. If you suspect New World Screwworm maggots in a wound call NCDA&CS at (919) 707-3250 or USDA APHIS VS at (919) 855-7700. **New World Screwworm is considered a reportable foreign animal disease in the United States.**

What should you be looking for?

Maggots in a wound or other body opening.

Remember NWS larvae feed on living tissue.

Look at wounds for hallmarks including:

- Bloody or serosanguinous discharge
- Foul odor
- Wounds that become deeper and larger. There also may be a very small surface wound with a large and deep wound under the skin. This occurs when maggots enter a small skin opening and feed on living tissue, causing an enlarging wound. (NWS can enter a wound as small as a tick bite)
- Maggots may be found in areas where you would not usually expect to see maggots: genitalia, navels of newborns, recent surgical or wound sites (castration, ear tagging, or tail docking)

Resources to learn more:

- [USDA National Veterinary Accreditation Program Training Module 41: New World Screwworm](#)
- www.screwworm.gov
- [Veterinary - New World Screwworm | NC Agriculture](#)
- **A one-page guidance document for veterinarians follows this page**

Call immediately if you suspect a case of New World Screwworm!



July 13, 2025

Steve Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Christina L. Waggett
Assistant Commissioner for
Consumer Protection

Michael P. Martin, DVM
State Veterinarian

Veterinarian's Guide to New World Screwworm Sampling

NEW WORLD SCREWORM IS A REPORTABLE DISEASE

If you suspect New World Screwworm (NWS) call either NCDA&CS or USDA immediately:

- NCDA&CS Livestock Health Programs: **(919) 707-3250**
- USDA APHIS Veterinary Services: **(919) 855-7700**

Collect a detailed history:

What other animals are at the same location (home or farm)?

Are there any other animals with wounds? Do these wounds have larvae?

Travel history for animals and humans for the past 2 weeks

If possible, take pictures of the wound and maggots for animal health officials. Please do not delay reporting for the purpose of obtaining pictures.

Sample collection:

- Wear appropriate PPE for sample collection. Avoid contaminating yourself with fly eggs.
- Collect maggots from the deepest part of the wound in a variety of sizes/stages of development.
- **10 maggots is the preferred sample size.** Forceps are recommended for collection.
- Wounds can be co-infected with other species of maggots. Endemic species will likely be the primary species present in the superficial areas. NWS maggots are usually found in deeper parts of the wound.
- Place the maggots in an **air-tight container** (a test tube, vial, or specimen container works well).
- Preserve the maggots in **70% alcohol**: either ethyl or isopropyl alcohol. Use sufficient volume to submerge the samples.

Treatment for New World Screwworm:

- Clean the wound and attempt to **remove all visible maggots and eggs.**
- **Place all larvae and eggs flushed from the wound into 70% alcohol to kill the larvae.** Any maggots not selected for submission can be discarded once they are in an airtight container with 70% alcohol.
- Apply a topical or systemic antiparasitic or insecticide
 - [APHIS SOP for Possible Detection of NWS in Animals](#)
- Reinspect the wound area for maggots every 24 hours
- [Pesticides for Control of NWS](#)
- [NWS: Information for Veterinarians | FDA](#)

*You can also find these
treatment resources here*



You will receive specific sample submission instructions after speaking to an animal health official.

The samples can be stored and shipped at room temperature (no cold pack is needed for shipping).