

New World Screwworm Identified in Domestic Animals in New Mexico and Texas

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DATE:	7/7/2026
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Debra L. Bogen, MD, FAAP, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	New World Screwworm Identified in Domestic Animals in New Mexico and Texas
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY.

Situation Summary

- New World Screwworm (NWS) is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on living tissue and can infest mammals and birds; it affects livestock, pets, wildlife, and humans.
- On June 3, 2026, NWS was identified in a Texas cow. Since then, [additional infestations](#) have been identified in domestic animals in Texas and New Mexico.
- NWS has not been found in livestock, pets, wildlife or in the environment in Pennsylvania (PA). In addition, no locally acquired cases of NWS infestation in humans have been identified in the U.S. The risk to human health in the U.S. remains very low.
- Individuals who experience signs of myiasis (infestation of vertebrate tissue by fly larvae) and have traveled to areas where NWS is [present](#) within the preceding 10 days should contact a health care provider.
- Health care providers who identify myiasis in a patient should ask about recent travel to a county, region, or county where NWS is present and notify the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) or local health department.
- **Do NOT throw any suspected NWS maggots outside or into the regular trash. Contact public health authorities for instructions on how to store and submit specimens for testing.**
- Providers must **immediately report suspected NWS** cases to local public health authorities or to DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

Background

NWS is a parasitic fly (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) whose larvae feed on living tissue and can infest mammals and birds. NWS largely affects livestock but can affect pets, wildlife, and humans. The adult fly is attracted to wounds or mucous membrane openings, where it will lay eggs. Wounds as small as a tick bite may attract a female fly to feed and lay eggs. One female can lay 200 to 300 eggs at a time and may lay up to 3,000 eggs during her lifespan. The larvae feed on healthy tissue, leading to pain, bloody discharge, and a foul-smelling odor from the site of infestation, with the potential for extensive tissue destruction and secondary bacterial infections. NWS is not directly contagious between animals or humans, as animals and humans are infested by adult flies in the environment.

NWS is endemic in the American tropics and subtropics, which includes most countries of South America, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Central America and Mexico are experiencing a re-emergence of NWS that has resulted in cases in both animals and humans for the first time in decades. On June 3, 2026, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that the first case of NWS was identified in a Texas cow. Since then, additional infestations have been identified in domestic animals in Texas and New Mexico. This is an evolving situation and the most recent information on animal detections in the United States (U.S.) can be found at USDA [here](#).

People at higher risk include:

- Those living in rural areas in regions where NWS is endemic or in areas currently experiencing an outbreak, and where livestock are raised.
- People who frequently work with livestock.
- Anyone with open sores or wounds, including from recent surgery, as the flies will lay eggs on open sores.
- Vulnerable population, including people who are immunocompromised, those at extremes of age, and people experiencing malnutrition.

Health care providers should consider NWS in patients

- With visible larvae or egg masses in a wound, ears, eyes, nose, mouth, or other bodily orifice,
- With destruction of healthy tissue,
- Who report sensation of movement, foul odor, bloody discharge, swelling, and pain,
- Who report recent travel to countries, regions, or counties where NWS is present.

NWS is only spread when a fly lays eggs in a wound. It is not spread through consumption of or contact with meat, poultry, dairy products, or contact with animals.

If a health care provider identifies myiasis (infestation of vertebrate tissue by fly larvae) in a patient, they should:

- Ask about recent travel to a country, region, or U.S. county where NWS is present. These areas include countries, regions, and counties that are currently experiencing an outbreak and those where it is endemic. Recent travel is considered travel in the 10 days before onset of clinical signs and symptoms. Use standard precautions when treating wounds and handling larvae. Treatment is primarily through removal of all larvae from the affected site. Medications to treat or prevent secondary bacterial infections may be needed. There is no medication that can treat NWS infestation in people. Collect all suspected NWS larvae and place them in a leak-proof container with 70% ethanol, or other alcohol (5 to 10% formalin is an acceptable alternative if alcohol is not available). Alcohol will kill the larvae and preserve them for identification.

Never discard live larvae in the trash, as larvae that are not appropriately disposed of can develop into adult flies, establish a local fly population, and promote further spread within the U.S. Larvae should be placed in a sealed alcohol container and disposed of as biohazardous waste, not regular

waste. Reexamine treated lesions after 24-48 hours to confirm that no live larvae remain.

There are many morphologically similar species of flies that can cause myiasis, and diagnostic confirmation can be conducted at CDC and must be facilitated by DOH.

All suspected **human** cases must be immediately reported to DOH at 717-787-3350 or the local health department.

All suspected **domestic animal** cases must be immediately reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture at 717-772-2852, option 1.

All suspected **wild animal** cases must be immediately reported to the Pennsylvania Game Commission at 833-PGC-WILD.

If you have additional questions about this guidance, please contact DOH at 1-877- PA- HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department

For questions, please call your local health department or DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

DOH reminds providers to immediately report suspected cases of New World Screwworm to [local public health authorities](#) or to DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

Individuals interested in receiving future PA-HANs can register [here](#).

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of July 7, 2026, but may be modified in the future.
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