

# Get the Facts on New World Screwworm



## The northern migration of this pest creates a renewed threat to U.S. livestock health and economy.

New World screwworm was eradicated from the United States in 1966 using the sterile insect technique, but there is a constant risk of re-introduction into the United States.<sup>1</sup> Make sure you're prepared with the latest information.

### The Basics of New World Screwworm

- The parasitic fly *Cochliomyia hominivorax* lays eggs in open wounds or around the eyes, nose or mouth of a warm-blooded animal. The larvae (maggots) then burrow into and feed on living flesh, causing significant damage.
- Untreated umbilical cords of newborn animals and foot lesions are commonly infested sites. Wounds as small as a tick bite may attract these flies.<sup>2</sup>
- An adult fly can travel up to 125 miles before laying eggs in a wound or around the eyes, nose or mouth of an animal. They also can be transported by animals, wildlife and people traveling from infested areas.<sup>3</sup>

### Symptoms to Watch For

Infested animals may display the following signs:<sup>4</sup>

- Irritated behavior
- Head shaking
- The smell of decay
- Presence of maggots in a wound

New World screwworm infestations are very painful. Infected animals may become depressed, stop eating, and separate themselves from other animals or people.<sup>3</sup>

**If you suspect an animal has New World screwworm, immediately report any suspicious wounds, maggots or infestations to a local accredited veterinarian, your state animal health official or the USDA.<sup>2,4</sup>**

## Treating New World Screwworm Infections

If you suspect a New World screwworm infection, call your veterinarian immediately. The following steps are recommended to treat the affected area:

- Clean the wound
- Remove the larvae
- Apply larvicides and measures to prevent secondary infections
- Veterinary care is essential to avoid complications.<sup>5</sup>

## Mitigating Risk of New World Screwworm

In areas where New World screwworm is found, measures should be implemented to prevent animal wounds and avoid myiasis caused by infestation.<sup>5</sup>

Integrated pest management considers parasitic life cycle, strategic use of treatment products and limiting higher risk management practices during times when New World screwworm flies could be active to help reduce their impact to livestock operations.<sup>5</sup>

Livestock producers are encouraged to work closely with their herd veterinarian to develop a strategic pest management plan that includes New World screwworm prevention strategies.



Visit [ZoetisUS.com/NewWorldscrewworm](https://www.zoetis.com/NewWorldscrewworm) to learn more and find additional resources.



## References

<sup>1</sup> USDA, APHIS. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>. Accessed 4/22/25.

<sup>2</sup> USDA, APHIS. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/bro-new-world-screwworm.pdf>. Accessed 4/22/25.

<sup>3</sup> CDFA. [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/pdfs/Screwworm\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/Screwworm_Fact_Sheet.pdf). Accessed 4/22/25.

<sup>4</sup> USDA, APHIS. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pest-alert-new-world-screwworm.pdf>. Accessed 4/22/25.

<sup>5</sup> WOA. <https://rr-americas.woah.org/en/news/frequently-asked-questions-about-new-world-screwworm/>. Accessed 4/22/25.

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