



# New World Screwworm (NWS): What Farm and Ranch Workers Need to Know

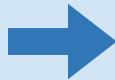
The New World Screwworm (NWS) is a type of fly that lays eggs in open wounds of living animals and people. The fly larvae (maggots) feed on flesh, causing pain, other symptoms, and even death. It affects livestock animals, wildlife, and pets, but it can also lay eggs on humans.

Some cases of NWS have been detected in the U.S. since June 2026. If you work with or live near domestic or wild animals in Texas or other at-risk states, this information can help you prepare!

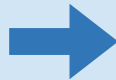
## How do NWS flies infect animals and people?



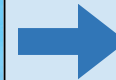
Female flies look for open wounds (as small as a bug bite) or openings like the nose, ears, mouth, or eyes.



They lay hundreds of eggs at a time.



When the eggs hatch, the maggots dig into the wound and begin feeding.



After a week, they fall off the body and grow into adult flies.

Adult New World Screwworm flies are about the size of a common housefly (or slightly larger). They have orange eyes, a metallic blue or green body, and three dark stripes along their backs.

## What are some signs and symptoms of New World Screwworm in animals and people?

### Symptoms in animals:

- Maggots inside the wound
- A wound that gets bigger or deeper
- Rotting smell from the animal
- Showing pain, not eating, or acting irritated
- Shaking their head
- Reduced milk production (in dairy animals)
- Severe infections that can cause death if untreated



### Symptoms in people:

- Feeling something moving in the wound
- Seeing maggots in or on the skin
- Painful wounds or wounds that get bigger or deeper
- Bad smell from the wound
- Bleeding or wounds that don't heal
- Fever or chills

## Who is at risk of NWS?

You're more at risk if you:

- Live in or visit places where these flies are found (some parts of Mexico and Central America)
- Work with livestock animals close to the U.S.-Mexico border
- Hunt or are in contact with wildlife
- Sleep outside without a tent or shelter
- Have an illness that cause open sores or make your body weak



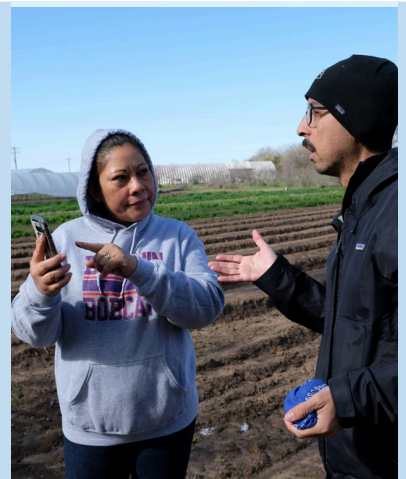
## How to protect yourself against NWS?

- Keep all cuts, even small ones, clean and covered
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent with ingredients like DEET or Picardin
- Wear long sleeves and pants outdoors
- Treat clothes with 0.5% permethrin if possible
- Sleep indoors or use a bed net/screened tent



## What to do if you think you or your livestock may have NWS?

- Contact your supervisor right away. Early treatment can save the animal and prevent the infection from spreading.
- If you are infected, do not try to remove the maggots yourself; get medical care right away.
- If any maggots fall out, place them in a sealed container with rubbing alcohol and bring them to your doctor.
- Livestock that was infected with NWS can be butchered and eaten if it has been inspected and approved by the Food Safety Inspection Service at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).



If you need to contact a health care provider or find a health center, call the **NCFH's Call for Health Helpline** at **1 (800) 377-9968** or via **WhatsApp** at **1 (737) 999-4162**. Help is confidential and available in English and Spanish.