



NEW WORLD SCREWORM

FACT SHEET



Photo Credit: USDA

IMPACT OF SCREWORM

The New World Screwworm (NWS) (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) was detected in the United States (Texas and New Mexico) in June 2026. NWS deposits eggs in wounds of live animals, and occasionally people, causing a serious condition (myiasis) where fly larvae (maggots) consume living animal tissue at the base or edge of the wound. This maggot feeding activity can result in a rapidly worsening condition that can result in animal death if left untreated.

Geographic Distribution: Prior to 2023, screwworm was restricted to South America and a few Caribbean islands with a quarantine barrier maintained in Panama by joint USDA-Panama release of sterile male flies. Screwworm recently escaped this quarantine and rapidly spread northward, reaching the United States in June 2026. Use the QR code to the right to view the current distribution of confirmed cases of screwworm in the United States.



- **Fly Movement:** Adult flies typically travel only a few miles on their own. Long-distance spread occurs primarily when infested livestock, dogs, or other animals are moved by people



Screwworm maggots.
Photo Credit: USDA

- **Clinical Signs:** Infested animals may develop enlarging wounds that are foul-smelling or produce excessive discharge. Animals may appear uncomfortable, irritable, or isolate themselves from other animals. In humans, infestations may cause pain or a sensation of movement within a wound or body opening. Close examination of wounds, lesions, or body openings may reveal maggots with bands of spines encircling their bodies (see image).
- **Foreign Animal Disease:** Screwworm is a reportable disease and must be reported within 24 hours. Report suspect livestock and pet cases to CDFA Animal Health Branch (**866-922-2473**), wildlife cases to USDA Wildlife Services Office (**866-487-3297**), or human cases to CDPH Epi on Call (**961-328-3605**).

- **Quarantine:** Animal health officials will quarantine all premises within an infested zone. During quarantine, CDFA and USDA will perform a case investigation and may recommend additional control measures to include administration of effective treatment products and/or sterile fly release to control the fly population. The quarantine will be released when surveillance and epi show no evidence of a reproducing fly population.
- **Additional Information:** More information is available at www.screwworm.gov, bit.ly/CDFA_NWS, and at murillolab.ucr.edu/screwworm.