



NEW WORLD SCREWWORM

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION



Texas FFA is sharing this information due to the recent detection of the New World Screwworm (NWS) in Texas.

Once eradicated from the United States, this destructive pest has re-emerged and poses a significant threat to animal health. While the New World Screwworm does not gravely impact human health or the safety of the food supply, it can affect livestock, horses, wildlife, pets, and other animals commonly raised and exhibited by FFA members across our state and could have huge impacts on our economy.

To help protect Texas agriculture, Texas FFA has worked with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and industry partners to provide the following information. We encourage all agricultural science teachers, FFA advisors, members, and livestock exhibitors to review these recommendations and take proactive steps to reduce risk within their chapters, communities, and operations.

WHAT IS THE NEW WORLD SCREWWORM?

Unlike common flies that lay eggs on dead or decaying tissue, the New World Screwworm fly lays eggs in wounds or natural body openings of living animals. After hatching, the larvae feed on living tissue, causing painful and expanding wounds that continue to grow rather than heal. If left untreated, infestations can lead to severe infection, reduced productivity, permanent injury, and even death.



THE NEW WORLD SCREWWORM CAN AFFECT:

CATTLE

SHEEP

GOATS

SWINE

HORSES

WILDLIFE

COMPANION ANIMALS

VIRTUALLY ANY WARM-BLOODED ANIMAL WITH AN OPEN WOUND CAN BE SUSCEPTIBLE.



WHY THIS MATTERS

The New World Screwworm was successfully eradicated from the United States in the 1960's through one of the most significant animal health programs in U.S. history. Prior to eradication, screwworm infestations caused substantial livestock losses and economic hardship for producers across the southern United States.

Today, the return of this pest presents a serious concern for animal agriculture. Early detection and rapid response are critical to preventing its spread and minimizing impacts on animal health, youth livestock projects, wildlife populations, and rural communities.

With more than 175,000 members and over 2,000 agricultural science teachers statewide, Texas FFA has a unique opportunity to support awareness, prevention, and early identification efforts across Texas.

WHY FFA MEMBERS SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY VIGILANT

Many routine livestock management practices create temporary wounds that can attract New World Screwworm flies. FFA members who raise and exhibit livestock should closely monitor animals following activities such as:

The faster a wound heals, the lower the risk of complications, including New World Screwworm infestation. Prompt wound care and daily monitoring are among the most effective prevention measures available.

- EAR TAGGING
- TATTOOING
- DEHORNING
- CASTRATION
- BRANDING
- TREATMENT OF CUTS, SCRAPES, AND INJURIES
- CARE OF NEWBORN ANIMAL NAVELS

HOW TEXAS FFA MEMBERS AND CHAPTERS CAN HELP

- Inspect livestock and project animals daily, paying close attention to wounds, ear tags, tattoo sites, and other areas susceptible to infestation.
- Treat and monitor wounds promptly to promote rapid healing and reduce the risk of infestation.
- Practice strong biosecurity measures at home, in chapter facilities, and during livestock shows.
- Maintain and improve effective fly control programs to reduce opportunities for flies to lay eggs in wounds.
- Remove and properly dispose of animal carcasses in a timely manner.
- Learn to identify the signs and symptoms of New World Screwworm infestation.
- Report suspicious wounds containing maggots or wounds that worsen rather than heal to a veterinarian or animal health official immediately.
- Follow recommended guidelines when transporting, exhibiting, and managing livestock.
- Establish clear procedures within your chapter for reporting animal health concerns.
- Encourage exhibitors to closely monitor animals following validation, tagging, tattooing, dehorning, castration, branding, and other management practices that create wounds.



SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Inspect animals daily and be alert for:

- Wounds that fail to heal
- Foul-smelling or draining wounds
- Visible maggots in wounds
- Head shaking
- Excessive rubbing or irritation
- Abnormal behavior
- Animals isolating themselves from the herd
- Depression or lethargy
- Reduced feed intake
- Loss of condition or performance

If you observe maggots in a wound or notice a wound worsening rather than healing, contact your veterinarian or the Texas Animal Health Commission 1-800-550-8242 immediately.



PROTECTING TEXAS AGRICULTURE

Protecting animal health is a shared responsibility. Through education, awareness, prevention, and early detection, Texas FFA members can play an important role in helping safeguard livestock, support agricultural producers, and protect the future of animal agriculture in Texas. Together, Texas FFA's 175,000 members and more than 2,000 agricultural science teachers can help ensure that New World Screwworm does not regain a foothold in our state. By staying informed, monitoring animal health, and reporting concerns promptly, we can support ongoing efforts to protect Texas livestock, wildlife, and agricultural communities.



HELPFUL RESOURCES:



Texas Animal Health Commission



Agrilife Today



Texas A&M AgriLife



Swine Health