



August 2025

New World screwworm (NWS) disease is an infestation with the larvae of the NWS fly (*Cochliomyia ovinivorax*) in warm-blooded animals. Female flies lay eggs in open wounds or the membranes of the mouth, eyes, nose, or genitalia, and the larvae eat living tissue. Infestation can be fatal if untreated. NWS was eradicated from the United States in 1966 but recently has been moving through Central American and was found in Mexico in 2024.

Livestock producers must be vigilant in monitoring livestock for signs of potential NWS infestation and immediately seeking veterinary care if suspected. Signs of infestation may include wounds that suddenly get bigger and smell like decay, irritated behavior, head shaking, and the presence of fly larvae in wounds. Larvae are likely to be deep in a wound, while there may be other types of fly maggots closer to the surface. Adult flies are roughly the size of a housefly, iridescent blue-green, and have orange eyes. If you are suspicious of NWS, call your veterinarian or report to the ODA State Veterinarian at 503-986-4711.

Initial Response (0-24 hours)

A state or federal official will contact you and come to your farm to collect samples to test for NWS. Affected animals will have their wounds treated and be given antiparasitic medication. They may also be treated for pain and secondary bacterial infection if needed.

Samples will be sent to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Veterinary Services Laboratory (USDA NVSL) for identification. Results are typically expected within 24-72 hours.

You may receive a quarantine order from a state official prior to arrival at your farm, or while at your farm. A quarantine means that any animals that could potentially be infested with NWS must remain on your farm and may not leave for any reason. Limit traffic and visitors to your farm and do not move animals or equipment while under quarantine.

Additional Treatment (24-48 hours)

State or federal officials will return in 24 hours to re-evaluate affected animals for live larvae and to conduct an evaluation of the other animals on the property. Other animals may be treated with dewormers or insecticides to prevent infestation. The premises will be decontaminated and treated with insecticide.

Confirmation of New World Screwworm (48-72 hours)

If infestation with NWS is confirmed, additional measures will be taken to eradicate NWS. Fly traps may be placed around the property to monitor for flies remaining in the area. If insecticide use is not successful in eliminating NWS, the USDA may implement advanced programs such as releasing reproductively sterile flies to decrease the number of eggs laid. Animals held in quarantine will be released after it is confirmed that no screwworm larvae remain.

Your Role in New World Screwworm Response

MONITORING

In addition to protecting the rest of the animals with dewormers and pesticides, it will be your responsibility to monitor for wounds and to keep them covered with bandaging or sprayed with insecticide to prevent infestation. Prevent injury by removing sharp items from animal housing areas and avoid moving animals between pens if possible. Proper care of umbilical stumps in newborns by regular dipping or spraying is also important to prevent infestation.

FACILITY DECONTAMINATION

State officials will assist in cleaning and decontaminating the premises by properly disposing of larvae and bedding as well as treating surfaces with insecticide. You will need to keep facilities clear of obstacles that may hinder decontamination.

SELF-CARE

Reportable animal diseases cause a lot of stress to producers. You will need to ensure that you, your family, and your workers make self-care a priority to remain healthy during this time.

Take care of yourself; try to eat and get some sleep. You are experiencing a very stressful event. Experiencing mental health challenges can be confusing and frightening. If you need someone to talk to about what is happening, experts are available to help.

NWS can sometimes affect humans. Monitor yourself, your family, and any workers for open wounds and keep them covered. Report symptoms of potential screwworm infestation in people to your local healthcare provider.

AgriStress Helpline for Oregon is a 24/7 free helpline that you can call or text at 833-897-2474. The operators are trained to help farming, ranching, fishing, and forestry communities.