

ANIMAL HEALTH ALERT

Veterinary Public Health | (213) 288-7060 | vet@ph.lacounty.gov | <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>



Animal Health Alert: New World Screwworm (NWS) - Preparedness and Reporting Guidance, Los Angeles County

Key Points

- New World Screwworm (NWS) is a reportable, foreign animal disease affecting all warm-blooded animals, including pets, livestock, wildlife, birds and humans.
- NWS is moving northward through Mexico, with recent animal cases in Tamaulipas, which borders Texas.
- Traveling or imported companion animals from NWS-affected countries pose a significant risk of infestation and introduction of the pest into the U.S.
- Early recognition, prompt reporting, proper specimen handling, and thorough disinfecting are critical to preventing establishment of NWS in the U.S.
- Veterinarians and their staff are encouraged to complete [AVMA](#) or [USDA](#) NWS trainings.
- Immediately report suspected cases of NWS in animals in Los Angeles County to the [California Department of Food and Agriculture](#) and notify [Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health](#).

Dear Veterinary Colleagues:

Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health (VPH) is monitoring the continued northward movement of New World Screwworm (NWS) through Mexico. Although eradicated in the U.S. in the 1960s, recent expansion northward raises concern for reestablishment. NWS myiasis is a reportable foreign animal disease and must be reported to VPH, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

While NWS causes severe, rapidly progressive disease in livestock, posing a significant threat to the livestock industry, it can also affect any warm-blooded animal including companion animals and humans. Private practice veterinarians, particularly those in companion animal practice, play a critical role in detection, reporting suspect cases of NWS, and in educating clients about the risk associated with the disease, particularly in animals that travel internationally. Preparedness is essential to prevent NWS establishment in the U.S. Training resources are available to help veterinarians and staff become familiar with clinical recognition of NWS, sample collection and submission, reporting requirements, and facility disinfection procedures.

Please ensure you and your staff utilize the following key training resources:

1. [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\) Webinar](#): (free, 1.0 CE) The AVMA, in collaboration with USDA, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) offers a free webinar covering the latest guidance on NWS. AVMA membership is not required, but you will need to create an AVMA profile to access the free training.
2. [USDA National Veterinary Accreditation Program Module 41](#): (free, 1.0 CE) An updated USDA accreditation training module addressing NWS preparedness and response.
3. Client education for pet owners traveling with their pets: [“New World Screwworm: What you need to know before traveling internationally with a pet”](#). This and other NWS related resources and materials are available at screwworm.gov

Current Situation

At this time, the NWS fly has not been detected in the U.S. and there is no immediate risk of infestation to animals or people domestically. There has been [one confirmed human case](#) of NWS in August 2025 in a person who returned to the U.S. after traveling to El Salvador. As of January 27, 2026, the [USDA reports](#) that there have been more than 14,000 animal cases in Mexico. More critically, Tamaulipas, a Mexican state that borders Texas, recently reported eight animal cases.

The presence of cases near the U.S. border increases the risk of introduction through animal movement, wildlife, or international travel. VPH is providing guidance and resources for veterinary professionals to ensure veterinarians are prepared to recognize, report and respond, as well as to educate pet owners who may be traveling with animals to and from [NWS-affected countries](#).

Disease Overview

NWS myiasis occurs when flies of the species *Cochliomyia hominivorax* lay their eggs in fresh wounds or in natural body openings such as the eyes, nose, mouth, or ears.

After hatching, larvae burrow or “screw” into and feed on **living** flesh. NWS differs from other causes of myiasis in that the larvae invade healthy, living tissue distinguishing NWS from other forms of myiasis that typically involve necrotic tissue.

Clinical disease can progress rapidly, with extensive tissue damage, secondary bacterial infection, toxemia, and death occurring within 7–14 days if untreated. Young or smaller animals are at higher risk for severe or fatal disease. While livestock (such as cattle) are most commonly affected, NWS can infect any warm-blooded animal, including dogs, cats, and humans.

Guidance for Veterinarians

- **Treat any suspicious wound myiasis as a reportable foreign animal disease until NWS ruled out.**
- Discuss NWS risks with pet owners including the potential risks of traveling to and from countries affected by NWS.

- Suspect NWS in animals with rapidly enlarging, painful, or foul-smelling wounds, especially if there is a history of recent travel to or importation from an NWS-affected country.
- Educate clients on proper wound care, ectoparasite control, and prompt veterinary evaluation.

Travel, Prevention, and Treatment Guidance

- Pets traveling from an NWS-affected country are at an increased risk of infestation and should receive a thorough physical exam by a veterinarian upon entry into the U.S.
- Traveling to an NWS-affected country is the primary risk factor; larvae can infest wounds as small as insect bites.
- Examine high-risk areas: face, ears, skin folds, perianal/genital regions, nail beds, navel, and surgical sites.
- Promptly treat all wounds, even if there is no visible evidence of myiasis.
- **Treatment:** FDA has issued an [Emergency Use Authorization for Credelio® \(lotilanter\)](#) for treatment of NWS in dogs and cats. Consider for pets traveling to NWS-affected countries, and administer prior to return to the U.S.

Responding to a Suspected NWS Case in Animals

- Immediately report any suspected cases to [CDFA](#) (Headquarters - 916-900-5002 or LA County residents may contact Ontario District office at 909-947-5932). Also notify [VPH](#).
- Remove and kill all larvae and eggs immediately; incomplete removal risks reinfestation and spread. In some cases, surgical intervention may be required.
- Collect larvae and eggs in 70% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol in leakproof containers; follow [CDFA guidance for submission and disposal](#). After collecting samples, any remaining larvae and eggs should be placed in a separate leakproof container filled with alcohol. Seal the container in a zip-top bag and dispose of it in the trash. **DO NOT discard larvae and eggs directly in the trash or outside on the ground.**
- Treat the wound appropriately with antiseptics and consider administering an [approved topical or systemic antiparasitic treatment](#).

For more information on identifying lesions, reporting and submitting samples, quarantine and treatment protocols, and cleaning and disinfecting of the premises, refer to [USDA's Standard Operating Procedure for Possible Detections of New World Screwworm in Animals](#).

Import Requirements (Dogs and Cats)

Ensure owners are aware of U.S. entry regulations from both [CDC](#) and [USDA](#), as well as any requirements of the destination state and the airline prior to travel to or from an NWS-affected country.

- CDC requires that dogs and cats appear healthy upon arrival into the U.S.; animals with open wounds or evidence of myiasis may be denied entry or subjected to additional inspection or quarantine.

- [USDA requirements](#) for dogs traveling from an NWS-affected country include an import certificate, inspection for NWS, treatment for NWS if needed, and possible quarantine.
- There are no USDA import certification requirements for cats at this time; however, cats are susceptible to NWS infestation and should be examined carefully before and after travel.

Resources:

CDFA

- [Animal Health Branch – New World Screwworm](#) – Information on the State response to NWS

USDA

- [Screwworm.gov](#) – Information on the unified Federal response to stop NWS
- [New World Screwworm: Veterinary Considerations for Dogs and Cats that Travel Internationally](#)
- [New World Screwworm: Be Aware and Prepare, Information for Veterinarians](#)
- [Bring a Pet Dog into the United States](#) – Information on traveling with pets from screwworm-affected countries

CDC

- [CDC Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#) – New World Screwworm: Outbreak Moves into Northern Mexico
- [New World Screwworm Outbreak](#) – Outbreak overview
- [Bringing an Animal into the U.S.](#) – Overview of CDC animal import requirements

FDA

- [New World Screwworm: Information for Veterinarians](#) – Includes information on treatment options

Thank you for your continued work to protect animal health.

Veterinary Public Health

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