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1. [Home](#)
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

USDA Approves Emergency Funding to Protect U.S. Livestock and Animals from New World Screwworm

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Stakeholder Announcement

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WASHINGTON, December 13, 2024 – The United States Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing \$165 million in emergency funding from the Commodity Credit Corporation to protect U.S. livestock and other animals from New World screwworm (NWS) and to increase USDA’s ongoing efforts to control the spread of NWS in Mexico and Central America. NWS are fly larvae that infest living tissue of warm-blooded animals, causing infection.

Over the last two years, NWS has spread throughout Panama and into Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. On November 22, 2024, the Chief Veterinary Officer of Mexico notified APHIS of a positive detection in southern Mexico, near the Guatemalan border.

The funding announced today bolsters USDA’s work in Mexico and Central America to stop the spread of NWS from moving north in Mexico, further protecting the United States through surveillance, animal health checkpoints and domestic preparedness, and by working with partners in Mexico and Central America to

establish a barrier on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, eradicate NWS from the affected areas, and reestablish the biological barrier in Panama.

“The current outbreaks in Central America demonstrate the need for USDA to increase its investment in NWS eradication and prevention,” said Jenny Lester Moffitt, USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. “If NWS were to spread to the United States, it would result in significant economic losses and threats to animal health and welfare. This funding will allow for a coordinated emergency response to control the outbreak and prevent NWS from spreading to the United States.”

APHIS is working with partners in Mexico and Central America to stop the spread of NWS into the United States and asking all producers along the southern border to watch their livestock and pets for signs of NWS and immediately report potential cases to their local veterinarian, State Veterinarian’s Office, or [APHIS Veterinary Services](#).

Eradicating NWS is only possible through sterile insect technique. With this method, sterile flies are released into an area where a known population has become established. The sterile male screwworm fly mates with fertile female screwworm fly, causing the population of screwworm flies to decrease until it eventually dies out.

APHIS is asking all producers along the southern border to watch their livestock and pets for signs of NWS and immediately report potential cases to their local veterinarian, State Veterinarian’s Office, or [APHIS Veterinary Services](#).

To learn more about NWS, visit the [APHIS website](#).