Monitoring for New World Screwworm: Southern Border

In June 2025, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced a comprehensive five-part plan to strengthen the U.S. Department of Agriculture's efforts to detect, control, and eliminate New World screwworm (NWS). A key part of this plan is proactive trapping along the U.S.–Mexico border to monitor for the pest. This added layer of surveillance complements Mexico's ongoing eradication efforts, helping to protect U.S. livestock, pets, and other animals.

When did trapping start and how long will it last?
Trapping started in Texas on July 23, 2025, and will continue until the threat of screwworm in Mexico decreases.

How many traps will USDA use to monitor the border and where will they be placed?
USDA and its state partners have deployed over 100 screwworm traps along the southern border in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California. We are continuously assessing the border to identify additional high-risk areas for strategic trap placement as conditions evolve. In parallel, USDA is also monitoring approximately 7,500 exotic fruit fly traps for the presence of NWS flies.

Will USDA expand the trapping zone to include inland areas that are not on the border?
Trap locations are carefully selected to optimize their effectiveness. Because NWS has not been detected in U.S. livestock or other animals since an outbreak in Florida Key deer was eradicated in 2017, USDA is focusing surveillance along the border.

What do the screwworm traps look like?

Each trap is made from a 13-inch long by 6.5-inch diameter irrigation pipe. A sign is attached to the trap for identification and instructions.

After the trap is hung, it is coated with Tanglefoot, a sticky substance. Swormlure-5 is also applied to attract screwworms.

How does the trap work?
Adult flies are attracted to the Swormlure-5 attractant. If flies land on the trap, they will get stuck on the nontoxic sticky surface area.

USDA or State partners will service the traps twice a week to collect flies and refresh the sticky coating and lure. If you see a trap hanging in a tree, please do not move it.

Will the traps draw NWS to the U.S. border?
No. The traps will not cause NWS to spread to new areas, but they will help us quickly detect the pest should it reach the border.

Can the traps catch screwworm flies to keep them out of an area or eliminate them from an area?
The traps will help us detect screwworm flies if they are in an area. They do not catch flies to reduce populations or stop them from spreading.

Can someone make their own traps to place on their property?
We do not recommend that landowners make and place their own traps. Trap locations are carefully selected to optimize their effectiveness.

What happens if USDA finds a screwworm fly in one of the traps?
If USDA confirms the detection of NWS in a trap on the border, USDA and State officials will quickly determine whether there is a population in the area and take steps to contain, control, and eradicate it. View USDA's NWS Response Strategy.

USDA has successfully eradicated NWS from the United States before using a proven combination of surveillance, animal movement controls, sterile insect releases, and public outreach.

Scan the QR code for the latest information on NWS, the outbreak in Mexico and Central America, and USDA's response plans.

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