

NEW WORLD SCREWORM

A Guide to Safe Horse Travel & Protection

Current as of June 2026 | For U.S. Horse Owners & Competitors

⚠ **URGENT: Screwworm Confirmed in the United States — June 3, 2026**

On June 3, 2026, the USDA confirmed New World Screwworm (NWS) in a calf in Zavala County, Texas.

A second case was confirmed in La Salle County on June 7, 2026.

Canada has implemented import restrictions on livestock including horses from parts of Texas. Horse owners, especially in southern states, must take immediate precautions. All suspected cases must be reported within 24 hours.

1. What Is the New World Screwworm?

The New World Screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is one of the most dangerous parasitic flies affecting warm-blooded animals. Unlike common blowflies that feed on dead tissue, screwworm maggots feed exclusively on living flesh — making infestations rapidly life-threatening if untreated.

The screwworm was eradicated from the United States in 1966 using the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), which releases sterile male flies to suppress reproduction. A brief outbreak occurred in the Florida Keys in 2016 but was successfully contained. In late 2024, cases began spreading northward through Mexico, and the fly has now been confirmed in Texas as of June 2026.

Life Cycle

Understanding the fly's life cycle is essential for early detection and prevention:

Stage	Details
Egg Stage	Female flies deposit 200–400 eggs at the edges of wounds or body openings (nose, sheath, navel, eyes, ears). Eggs hatch in 11–21 hours.
Larval Stage	Larvae (maggots) immediately burrow into living tissue. They feed for 5–7 days, growing through three instars, deepening the wound as they go.
Pupal Stage	Mature larvae drop to the ground to pupate for 7–54 days depending on temperature and soil conditions.

Adult Stage

Adult flies emerge and mate within days. Females only mate once but can lay multiple egg batches throughout their 2–3 week lifespan.

2. Risk to Horses

Horses are particularly vulnerable to screwworm for several reasons: they frequently have minor wounds from trail riding, turnout, fly bites, and farrier work; they have accessible body cavities such as the sheath, nostrils, and ears; and they often travel across state lines and borders for competition, breeding, and sale.

High-Risk Situations for Horses

- Any open wound, surgical incision, or skin abrasion — including minor cuts and insect bites
- Foals: the umbilical stump is a primary target in endemic areas (as seen in the Texas cases)
- Mares after foaling — exposed birth canal tissue is highly vulnerable
- Geldings: the sheath is a common infestation site
- Horses with ear mites, tick bites, or irritated skin around the eyes and nose
- Recently castrated horses or horses with fresh surgical sites
- Travel to or through Texas or other regions where NWS has been confirmed

3. Signs and Symptoms

Early detection is critical. Screwworm infestations can escalate from minor wound to life-threatening condition within 24–48 hours. Inspect all horses daily, especially any with existing wounds.

Warning Signs — Inspect Daily

- Wounds that are not healing, or that appear to be getting larger and deeper
- A foul, distinctive odor coming from a wound
- Ragged, undermined wound edges
- Visible creamy-white maggots burrowing into PINK, LIVING tissue
- Unusual discharge (bloody or serosanguineous) from a wound
- Increased pain, restlessness, pawing, or behavioral change
- Lethargy, loss of appetite, or fever in advanced cases
- Fly activity clustered around a specific wound site

NOTE: Screwworm maggots burrow INTO tissue. Common blowfly larvae feed on the wound surface.

If in doubt, call your veterinarian immediately — do not wait.

4. Treatment

Screwworm requires immediate veterinary intervention. This is a federally reportable disease — all confirmed or suspected cases must be reported to state animal health officials within 24 hours of suspicion.

Veterinary Treatment Steps

- Manual removal of all larvae — every single maggot must be physically removed from the wound
- Thorough wound debridement and cleaning with antiseptic solutions
- Application of FDA Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) products (see below)
- Systemic antimicrobials if secondary infection is present
- Surgical debridement may be required in severe or deep infestations
- Daily wound monitoring until fully healed

FDA Emergency Use Authorized Products (as of June 2026)

The FDA has issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for several products for use in horses:

Product	Notes / Authorization
NexGard / NexGard COMBO	Authorized February 18, 2026 — prevention and treatment in horses
F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment with Insecticide	Authorized April 24, 2026 — prevention and treatment, multiple species including horses
Negasunt Powder (topical)	Authorized April 27, 2026 — prevention and treatment in horses
Dectomax Injectable (doramectin)	Authorized May 19, 2026 — OTC use in horses, swine, sheep, and deer
Ivermectin (oral)	Historically used extra-label in other countries; no published horse efficacy studies; judicious use required due to resistance concerns

IMPORTANT: Always consult your veterinarian before selecting a treatment product. Regulatory status and product availability continue to evolve. Check the FDA's animal drugs page and your state veterinarian's guidance for current information.

5. Prevention for Horse Owners

Wound Management

- Treat all wounds — even minor cuts, abrasions, and insect bites — promptly
- Keep wounds clean and covered where possible
- Apply fly-repellent wound sprays approved for horses (e.g., Sore No-More Ricochet, Banixx)
- Minimize trauma during handling, farrier work and turnout
- Inspect umbilical stumps on newborn foals multiple times daily

Fly Control

- Use fly sheets, masks, and leg wraps to reduce fly contact with horses
- Implement a robust barn fly control program: fly traps, automatic insecticide systems, manure management
- Eliminate standing water and organic debris that attract flies
- Consider premise sprays and approved pour-on fly control products

Daily Monitoring

- Inspect every horse from head to tail every day — including sheath, nostrils, ears, and under mane and tail
- Inspect any wound site at least twice daily
- Keep records of wound locations and healing progress
- Know the difference between screwworm larvae (burrow into pink tissue) and common blowfly larvae (surface feeders on necrotic tissue)

6. Safe Travel with Horses to Youth & Mid Summer Nationals

Traveling with horses during the screwworm situation requires careful planning, documentation, and vigilance. Requirements currently in place are ANY states with confirmed cases (currently Texas & New Mexico) will need a CVI issued within 5 days of movement that includes a statement "all animals listed were individually inspected and found free of wounds" to enter Oklahoma.

Additional Items to Know Before You Travel

- Contact the destination state's veterinarian to confirm current movement requirements and any restrictions
- Have your veterinarian conduct a thorough wound inspection prior to departure

- Treat and heal all wounds before travel if at all possible
- Apply fly-repellent products before loading
- Check screwworm.gov and your state's animal health agency for the latest information

Current Movement Restrictions (June 2026)

Active Restrictions as of June 2026

Texas: Movement restrictions are in place in Zavala, Uvalde, La Salle, and Webb Counties.

- TAHC Executive Director Orders issued June 5–7, 2026 govern movement from these counties.
- A Certificate of Veterinary Inspection with screwworm inspection is required to move horses out.

Mexico Border: The Texas-Mexico land border remains closed to live animal imports from Mexico.

- Expected to remain in place for most of 2026.
- Horses from Mexico may only enter the U.S. by AIR after 7-day quarantine or vet clearance.

Canada: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has implemented temporary import restrictions

on livestock including horses from parts of Texas, effective June 2026.

Other States: States may implement their own movement restrictions for horses originating from or traveling through affected areas. Check your destination state's veterinarian website.

During Travel

- Inspect horses at every stop — at least every 4–6 hours on long hauls
- Keep trailer clean and free of manure and organic material that attracts flies
- Use fly sheets and masks during transport
- Minimize time horses are tied or stationary outdoors in affected regions
- Do not allow horses to graze or be turned out in areas with screwworm reports without supervision

At Your Destination

- Inspect all horses thoroughly upon arrival
- Notify your host facility if you are traveling from Texas or any affected region
- Monitor horses for 7–14 days following travel from affected areas
- Have contact information for a local veterinarian before you arrive
- Know the signs of screwworm and act immediately if any are observed

Competition & Events

US Equestrian (USEF) and other governing bodies are working with state and federal officials on competition protocols. Event organizers may implement their own entry requirements. Always check with the event organizer and consult USEF guidelines before traveling to competitions in or near affected regions.

- Organizers may require proof of veterinary inspection or negative screwworm status
- Events in affected counties or states may be postponed or cancelled
- Horses placed under quarantine by state officials cannot be transported to competitions

7. Reporting Requirements

New World Screwworm is a federally reportable foreign animal disease in the United States. Early reporting is one of the most important tools for preventing spread.

Who / When	Contact / Action
Timeframe	Report within 24 hours of suspicion — do not wait for confirmation
Texas Livestock	Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) — call your Regional Office or Vet on Call: 1-800-550-8242
Texas Wildlife	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) — contact a wildlife biologist
Texas Human Cases	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Other States	Contact your state veterinarian's office or USDA APHIS Veterinary Services
All States	Federal: USDA APHIS — screwworm.gov 1-800-414-8871
Canada	Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) — 1-800-442-2342

8. Key Resources

Resource	Description / URL
USDA — screwworm.gov	Official federal hub for NWS information, updates, and factsheets
FDA Animal Drugs for NWS	fda.gov/animal-veterinary — current EUA product list
Texas Animal Health Commission	tahc.texas.gov/emergency/nws.html — TX situation updates
US Equestrian (USEF)	usef.org — competition and movement guidance for equestrians

AAEP (Vets)	aaep.org — equine-specific prevention and treatment guidance
AAHA	aaha.org — companion animal and multi-species guidance
CDC	cdc.gov/new-world-screwworm — human health information
State Veterinarians	Search “[your state] state veterinarian screwworm” for local requirements

This document is for informational purposes only. Regulations and treatment options are evolving rapidly. Always consult your accredited veterinarian and your state veterinarian for the most current guidance.

Prepared June 2026 | Sources: USDA APHIS, FDA CVM, TAHC, USEF, AAEP, CDC