



New World Screwworm

Veterinary Guidance

New World Screwworm (**NWS**) is a species of parasitic larvae of the NWS fly (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) that burrows into the flesh of animals. Female flies lay eggs on or near open wounds, mucous membranes, or vulnerable areas like a fresh umbilicus. Larvae then hatch and enter these tissues causing fly infestation (myiasis). Once a wound is present, other species of flies may be attracted to it, so multiple species of fly larvae may be present in the same wound. Only NWS larvae will feed on living, healthy tissue. Livestock are most commonly affected, but NWS can affect any warm-blooded animal including humans and birds.

Identification of NWS is done by collection and evaluation of larvae:

- Using forceps, gently remove larvae of different sizes from several sites within the open wound.
- *Ensure samples are removed from the **deepest parts of the wound and burrows within tissues** to increase chances of collecting the right species of larvae.*
- Place larvae in a vial or container with 70% alcohol (ethanol or isopropyl); they must be fully submerged.
- Seal the vial or container and place it in a sealable plastic bag. Place this into a secondary sealable plastic bag.

Submitting Samples

Contact the New Mexico Livestock Board (NMLB), Office of the State Veterinarian, prior to submitting samples. Complete the NM Department of Agriculture Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) lab submission form and enclose it with the sample in a separate sealable plastic bag to protect the paperwork from any potential leaks. Secure samples in a proper shipping container and send to VDS.

Treatment

- Animals impacted by NWS myiasis should be treated immediately. Effective treatments may vary and should be evaluated using current recommendations for specific species and areas affected.
- Remove all visible eggs and larvae from in and around a wound. **Make sure all larvae and eggs are killed by soaking them in alcohol (ethanol or isopropyl), bleach, or formalin before disposal.**
- Treat wounds with a pesticide such as permethrin; treat systemically with ivermectin or an appropriate anti-parasitic treatment for the species.
- Assess the level of wound care needed and treat accordingly.

This is a REPORTABLE DISEASE! - If you see something, say something!

If you suspect a case of NWS, contact the NMLB immediately at 505-841-6161 or 505-414-2811. Report suspected wildlife cases to the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish at 505-690-3208. Human cases should be reported to the New Mexico Department of Health at 833-796-8773.