UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 27 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON PARASITIC & VECTOR BORNE DISEASES**

SUBJECT MATTER: **New World Screwworm Eradication in the United States, Mexico, and Central America**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) supports the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), New World screwworm (NWS) Directorate to request and Congress to appropriate sustained and additional funding to:

1. Fully fund the completion, operation, and long-term maintenance of the sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base and evaluate, develop, construct, and operate additional sterile fly production capacity as needed to ensure the uninterrupted availability of sterile flies for eradication and emergency response efforts;

2. Fund the construction, operation, and maintenance of additional strategically located sterile fly dispersal facilities within the United States (US) to enhance domestic response capabilities and support future eradication operations in Mexico and Central America;

3. Provide sustained and supplemental appropriations to USDA-APHIS to support current and expanded sterile fly production capacity sufficient to meet domestic response needs while simultaneously supporting NWS eradication efforts in Mexico and Central America; and

4. Provide sustained and supplemental appropriations for domestic NWS surveillance, diagnostic capacity, emergency response operations, training and exercises, wildlife monitoring, research, technology development, and state-federal preparedness programs necessary to rapidly detect, contain, and eradicate infestations within the US.

The USAHA further urges USDA-APHIS, in coordination with international partners, to initiate and sustain comprehensive NWS eradication efforts in Mexico and Central America as soon as practicable once adequate sterile fly production capacity is available, with the goal of reestablishing a secure biological barrier south of the US.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

New World screwworm (NWS) (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*), a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the living tissue of livestock, wildlife, companion animals, and humans, was successfully eradicated from the United States (US) in 1966 through a coordinated effort utilizing sterile insect technique (SIT), surveillance, animal movement controls, and federal-state-industry cooperation. Eradication efforts cost stakeholders tens of millions of dollars. Today, freedom from NWS provides approximately $1 billion annually in direct benefits to US livestock producers and approximately $3.7 billion annually in benefits to the broader US economy. These benefits include increased meat and milk production; reduced livestock mortality; lower veterinary, medication, and labor costs; improved wildlife health; and the avoidance of significant public health impacts associated with human myiasis. Since eradication, the continued protection of US animal agriculture has depended on maintaining a biological barrier in Central America through the work of the Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm (COPEG).

On November 22, 2024, the Government of Mexico notified the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), of a confirmed detection of NWS in Chiapas, Mexico. Since that detection, USDA has committed substantial resources to international eradication and domestic preparedness, including $21 million for the expansion of sterile fly production capacity in Mexico, $8.5 million for the Moore Air Base sterile fly dispersal facility in Texas, approximately $610 million for the construction of a domestic sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base, and approximately $105 million through the USDA-APHIS New World Screwworm Grand Challenge to support research, innovation, and preparedness initiatives. Collectively, these investments exceed $744 million and demonstrate the critical importance of sustained federal appropriations to respond to and prevent the reestablishment of New World screwworm in the US.

On June 3, 2026, USDA-APHIS confirmed the first US case of the current outbreak in a calf in Zavala County, Texas. Throughout the summer of 2026, additional detections were confirmed across multiple Texas counties and two counties in New Mexico, prompting the implementation of an extensive state and federal response that includes enhanced surveillance, epidemiologic investigations, animal movement restrictions, livestock inspections, and expanded SIT operations. The response continues to be coordinated among USDA-APHIS, the Texas Animal Health Commission, the New Mexico Livestock Board, and industry partners to contain the outbreak and prevent further spread.

The expanding NWS population in Mexico, the large geographic areas of infestation in the US, and the distance between those areas and the sterile fly dispersal facility at Moore Air Base demonstrate the need for additional domestic sterile fly dispersal facilities to support sterile fly dispersal throughout the southwestern US, the region at greatest risk of NWS infestation. Beyond eradication efforts in the US, these facilities will play an integral role in NWS eradication efforts in Mexico once adequate numbers of sterile flies are available.