

Protecting Equine Athletes and Equine Events from New World Screwworm Guidance for Equine Veterinarians (June 2026)

Background

Cochliomyia hominivorax, commonly known as New World Screwworm (NWS), is a foreign parasitic pest that was eradicated from the United States in 1966.

After eradication, Panama, in collaboration with the United States, established a biological barrier at the Darién Gap using the sterile fly technique to help prevent northward spread.

In 2023, NWS breached the Darién Gap barrier and began spreading north through Central America and Mexico toward the United States. In response, state and federal animal health officials enacted the NWS Response and Eradication Plan.

Current Situation

On June 3, 2026, USDA confirmed the first U.S. case of *Cochliomyia hominivorax* in the umbilical area of a calf in Zavala County, Texas. On June 7, 2026, USDA confirmed an additional case in a dog in Lea County, New Mexico. Several more cases have since been confirmed in Texas. For the most current case counts and maps, visit www.screwworm.gov. Once a case is confirmed, the affected premises is quarantined, and a 20 km (12-mile) infested area is established. Animal movement restrictions or requirements apply within and from that designated area.

Reporting of Suspect NWS Cases



Equine practitioners play a critical role in controlling and eradicating New World Screwworm (NWS). Early identification of suspect larvae in wounds and immediate reporting to animal health officials are essential to stopping further spread.

- Prompt reporting helps ensure that affected animals are evaluated and managed quickly.
- The detection of larvae signals that NWS flies may be present in the area and that additional response measures may be needed.
- Rapid notification supports timely deployment of sterile flies, a key tool in controlling and eradicating NWS. Delay in reporting can allow additional generations of flies to develop and spread.
- Suspect NWS cases should be reported immediately to state or federal animal health officials.

Rules for Movement of Horses

Movement restrictions are essential to prevent the spread of New World Screwworm (NWS). Transporting an infested animal can introduce the pest into a new area beyond the fly's existing radius, so horse movement from affected locations must be managed carefully.

- Each state establishes its own requirements for animals originating from an infested state, county, or designated infested area.

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- In general, horses may move from an infested area only after meeting strict inspection, permit, and treatment requirements.
- When an animal is traveling out of a state where screwworm is confirmed, the state of origin may also impose requirements on movement within the state.
- **Because requirements vary, it is essential to confirm current entry rules with the state of destination before movement occurs.**

NWS Treatments for Horses

Currently, the absence of any published data on NWS therapeutics for equine has resulted in very limited EPA/FDA-authorized products labeled for NWS prevention or treatment in horses. The lack of labeled products creates practical challenges for veterinarians managing horse movement from infested areas.

- **Systemic options:** These may include Dectomax injectable, authorized for emergency use in horses 1 year of age and older, and extra-label use of oral ivermectin when permitted under applicable veterinary regulations.
- **Topical options:** These may include FDA emergency use authorized products such as F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray, F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment, and Negasunt Powder, as well as EPA-registered pesticide products labeled for use in appropriate settings.
- The AAEP has published *New World Screwworm: Prevention and Treatment Options* to help practitioners review currently available products and key considerations for use.
- For additional guidance, consult the AAEP resource at <https://aaep.org/guidelines-resources/new-world-screwworm/>.

NWS and Equine Events

Protecting horse health and maintaining the continuity of competition depend on preventing the introduction of NWS into event venues. To reduce this risk, state animal health officials, governing bodies, and/or competition management may implement entry NWS protocols. The goal of these protocols is to ensure that horses from infested areas either have no wounds or that any wounds have been examined and are either treated as required or are free of screwworm larvae.

- Event-specific requirements may differ by state, organization, or venue. For example, Kentucky requires animals entering from an infested state to be inspected on arrival at the destination in Kentucky by a veterinarian.
- Veterinarians should review both state movement requirements and competition rules for the jurisdictions where horses are located and where they will travel.

Staying current on these requirements helps veterinarians guide clients, protect horse health, and support the continued operation of equine events.

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USEF Rules for Competitions

The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) is requiring licensed competitions to implement **the following measures for horses arriving from an infested state:**

- A designated individual must inspect each horse from an infested state before it enters the stabling area. This person is not required to be a veterinarian unless the show takes place in a state that mandates veterinarians to examine horses coming from infested states.
- If a wound is identified on arrival, the competition veterinarian must examine the horse for evidence of larvae.
- If a horse with a wound is not accompanied by a veterinary certificate documenting wound treatment, the competition veterinarian must apply an approved NWS topical treatment. Approved treatments vary from state to state.
- All horses from an infested state must be visually monitored for 7 days for any new wounds or changes to an identified wound.

These requirements are intended to prevent NWS from entering competition venues. Screwworm larvae pose a serious risk because they could lead to the establishment of a local NWS population, threatening both equine health and the continuity of competition.