



THE NAVAJO NATION  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

### New World Screwworm (NWS) Public Awareness Notice

June 11, 2026

The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture (NDA) is notifying livestock owners, pet owners, wildlife managers and the general public about the recent confirmation of a **New World Screwworm (NWS)** identified in a dog in Lea County, New Mexico. Although there are **no confirmed cases on the Navajo Nation**, animal owners are encouraged to remain vigilant and monitor animals for signs of infestation.

#### What is the New World Screwworm?

New World Screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a parasitic fly whose larvae (maggots) feed on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals including livestock, pets, wildlife and in rare cases humans.

Unlike common maggots that feed on dead or decaying tissue, New World Screwworm larvae invade healthy, living tissue. Female flies deposit eggs in open wounds or natural body openings. Once hatched, the larvae burrow into the flesh and feed on living tissue, causing severe injury, infection, suffering and potentially death if left untreated.

#### Current Status

There are currently **no confirmed cases of New World Screwworm on the Navajo Nation**. Following the confirmation of a case in Lea, County, New Mexico, the Navajo Nation Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Response Plan (RDCAU-43-04) and is coordinating with federal, state, and tribal partners to monitor the situation and protect Navajo Nation livestock and animal resources.

The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture is working closely with:

- Navajo Nation Department of Resource Enforcement
- Navajo Nation Department of Health
- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- State Animal Health Officials
- Veterinary Professionals (Local & State)
- Grazing Officials and District Land Boards

Should a positive case be confirmed within Navajo Nation boundaries, the Navajo Nation Core Response Group will be activated to implement emergency response measures designed to protect livestock, companion animals, wildlife resources and public health.

Status updates and additional information regarding New World Screwworm are available at:

[www.screwwormnm.org](http://www.screwwormnm.org)

[www.screwworm.gov](http://www.screwworm.gov)

## **What to Look For**

Animal owners are encouraged to inspect their animals daily and watch for:

- Draining, enlarging, or foul-smelling wounds
- Maggots or egg masses in wounds
- Signs of discomfort, irritation, or unusual behavior
- Excessive licking, biting, or rubbing of wounds
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Lesions around the ears, eyes, nose, mouth, navel, tailhead or genital area
- Bloody discharge around wounds
- Separation from the herd or flock

High-risk situations include:

- Branding
- Castration
- Dehorning
- Ear tagging
- Shearing injuries
- Fence injuries
- Difficult births
- Any open wound or surgical procedure

## **Prevention**

Animal owners can help reduce the risk of infestation by:

- Inspection of animals regularly
- Treating and cleaning wounds promptly
- Practicing routine fly control measures
- Maintaining good nutrition and herd health
- Monitoring newborn animals closely
- Seeking veterinary assistance when unusual wound activity is observed

Do not ignore wounds that appear to be worsening or contain maggots. Prompt treatment and reporting are essential to preventing the spread of New World Screwworm.

## Reporting Suspected Cases

Anyone who suspects an infestation should immediately contact the Navajo Nation Veterinary Program, the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture (NNDA), the Department of Resource Enforcement (DRE), their local Grazing Official, or District Land Board Member.

When reporting a suspected case, please provide:

- Owner name and contact information
- Location of animals (GPS Coordinates)
- Species and number of animals affected
- Description of the wound or infestation
- Date the infestation was first observed
- Photographs, if available

Do not move affected animals unless directed by animal health officials. Early detection and reporting are critical to protecting animal health and preventing the spread of this pest.

## Food Safety

The U.S. food supply remains safe. New World Screwworm does not infest meat or other food products.

Consumers are encouraged to follow normal food safety practices and continue purchasing meat products from approved and inspected sources.

## Protecting Navajo Nation Livestock

Livestock production is vital to the culture, traditions, food security, and economy of the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as additional information becomes available.

*David Manuelito*

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Navajo Nation Veterinarian

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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