



Standard Operating Procedure for Possible Detections of New World Screwworm in Animals

New World Screwworm (NWS) myiasis is a foreign animal disease (FAD) in the United States. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) has developed this guidance for veterinarians and/or animal health officials examining animals with suspected screwworm lesions. This includes animals imported into the United States. The procedures detailed below provide guidance on identifying screwworm lesions, notifying pertinent Federal and State animal health officials, submitting samples for laboratory analysis, quarantine and treatment of affected animals and subsequent cleaning, disinfestation and monitoring of the premises.

1. Identification and Notification of Suspect Cases

- a. Screwworm infestation is most often associated with the presence of a pre-existing wound but may also be found in mucous membranes or ears. Any wounds should be examined for the presence of myiasis (infestation with larval flies/maggots). Areas of infestation may be malodorous and suppurative with bloody or purulent discharge. **See USDA brochure referenced in the “Additional Resources” section of this document for pictures of screwworm infestation in animals.**
- b. If screwworm myiasis is suspected in a domestic or imported animal (including exotics, wildlife and pets) the following actions must be taken:
 - i. Contact the [APHIS VS Area Veterinarian in Charge \(AVIC\)](#) for your state **and** your [State Animal Health Officials \(SAHO\)](#). The APHIS AVIC and/or SAHO is responsible for initiating an FAD Investigation per VS Guidance Document (VSG) [12001 Policy for the Investigation of Potential Foreign Animal Disease/Emerging Disease Incidents \(FAD/EDI\)](#).
 - ii. For imported animals, additionally contact the APHIS VS Live Animal Import (LAI) unit: LAIE@usda.gov, copying Dr. Mary Kate Anderson (marykate.anderson@usda.gov). APHIS LAI will notify other APHIS VS units, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other necessary agencies.

2. Submission of Samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL)

- a. The examining* or official veterinarian must take samples of suspected screwworm larvae (maggots) and send them to NVSL for official identification.
 - i. To obtain specimens for identification, gently remove larvae from several sites and depths within the open wound using forceps.
 - ii. Because secondary myiasis may be present and is most often found near the surface of the wound, it is especially important to collect specimens from the deepest part of the lesion. If possible, collect larvae of different sizes for submission.



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- iii. Place the specimens in a tightly closing vial or test tube and preserve the specimens in alcohol (ethyl or isopropyl) at room temperature. The concentration should be 70 percent by volume.
- iv. Specimens should be submitted to the NVSL with a Parasite Submission Form ([VS Form 5-38](#)) available on the APHIS website.
- v. Specimen mailing address:

NATIONAL VETERINARY SERVICES LABORATORIES
1920 Dayton Avenue Ames, IA 50010
Telephone: 515-337-7514
- vi. Email NVSL (VS.DB.NVSL.DBRL.Parasitology@usda.gov) at the time you ship the specimen to notify them that a suspect screwworm myiasis sample is in transit. Include shipment tracking information.

3. Quarantine and Treatment of the Affected Animal

- a. **Quarantine:** The affected animal(s) must be held in quarantine under the supervision of a USDA accredited veterinarian and/or an official (federal, state) veterinarian, until official parasite identification has been obtained and effective treatment implemented. APHIS and State Animal Health Officials will determine appropriate quarantine premises, dependent upon location, overall risk and availability of suitable facilities with effective vector control.
- b. **Treatment:** Any animal confirmed to be affected with screwworm myiasis must undergo effective treatment along with treatment of the surrounding premises.
 - i. All visible eggs and larvae must be removed from in and around the wound and disposed of as outlined in section 4a below. The wound should then be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
 - ii. Depending on severity, the animal may need extensive wound care, systemic antimicrobials, and analgesia.
 - iii. A systemic medication with larvicidal activity demonstrated to be effective in eliminating screwworm larvae from the affected species must be administered (e.g., ivermectin for livestock). If additional treatment guidance is needed, contact APHIS. (See APHIS SOPs for NWS identification and treatment in dogs and equines in the Additional Resources section below).
- c. The affected animal(s) must be re-inspected by the examining veterinarian 24 hours after administration of appropriate treatment to confirm no live larvae remain in the wound. If live larvae are found, the additional larvae should be removed as outlined in 3b above with continued monitoring of the wound. Re-treatment may be necessary.
- d. The affected animal(s) may be released from quarantine after it is confirmed that no screwworm larvae remain, and the animal is determined by the official veterinarian (State Animal Health Official, CDC Veterinary Medical Officer or APHIS VS Veterinary Medical Officer) to be free of screwworm.

4. Cleaning and Disinfesting the Affected/Quarantine Premises



- a. All expelled larvae in the environment must be collected into tightly sealed tubes with alcohol to kill the larvae, and Ziploc bagged before throwing in the trash.
 - b. Holding areas (pens, stalls, kennels etc.) should be first sprayed with a larvicidal insecticide then wiped out to find potential larval or pupal flies. These should be collected and disposed of as previously mentioned. A list of effective insecticides can be found in the [USDA APHIS Disease Response Strategy for New World Screwworm Myiasis](#).
 - c. Any bedding present in the holding area should be sprayed with insecticide prior to removal, and promptly bagged. Prior to movement offsite/ disposal, drench the bag contents and spray the outside of the bag with insecticide then close tightly. Put this sprayed bag into another bag, spray the inside and outside of that second bag with insecticide, and close/ seal tightly.
 - d. The holding area should then be washed with warm water and soap to reduce animal exposure to insecticide residue.
5. Premises Monitoring

Note: Other options for premises monitoring may be permissible depending on facility specifics. Contact [APHIS VS](#).

- a. In the quarantine area, hang fly paper (or other type of effective fly trap) in several locations ([example](#)).
 - i. Monitor the fly paper weekly (or more often) to ensure sure it doesn't dry out. If the paper is dry, it should be replaced.
 - ii. Remove all flies found on the paper/trap. Using forceps, gently remove (tease) any flies from the paper trying not to mangle the fly. Put the fly into a vial containing ethanol and send to the NVSL as described above in section 2.
- b. Continue this monitoring and submission of any flies obtained at least weekly for a full month after the affected animal(s) has been released.
- c. APHIS VS must be informed of any additional findings of screwworm flies during the monitoring stage post-quarantine.

Additional Resources:

- [Companion Animal Parasite Council](#)
- [USDA APHIS Disease Response Strategy for New World Screwworm Myiasis](#)
- [USDA APHIS New World Screwworm Brochure](#)
- [USDA APHIS New World Screwworm website](#)
- [Old and New World Screwworm \(WOAH\)](#)
- [APHIS SOP for Possible Detection of NWS in Dogs](#)
- [APHIS SOP for Possible Detection of NWS in Equine](#)