



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 4, 2026

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New World Screwworm Detection Poses No Threat to Food Safety

JACKSON, Miss. – Following confirmation by U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the detection of the New World screwworm (NWS), in a bovine calf in Texas, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson ensures consumers this detection poses no threat to food safety.

“I want to ensure the public that the confirmation of the New World screwworm in South Texas poses no threat to food safety. The New World screwworm is an invasive pest, not an infectious disease. This is an animal health issue, not a food safety issue. Our meat supply is safe to eat,” said Commissioner Gipson. “USDA is taking immediate action to contain and eradicate the NWS. We are closely monitoring the situation and staying in close contact with our partners at USDA and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.”

USDA APHIS confirmed the detection of NWS in a 3-week-old calf and larvae were identified in its umbilical area. NWS is a serious pest that affects livestock, pets, wildlife, and less commonly, people and birds.

The U.S. food supply is safe. Screwworms do not infest meat, fruits, vegetables, or other food sources. USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) ensures that the nation’s commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe and properly labeled. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), FSIS inspection personnel must inspect all eligible animal species unless they are exempt or covered by a state inspection program. Any evidence of screwworm infestation in an animal would be identified during these inspections, and any contaminated product from an affected animal would not be allowed to enter the food supply.

If livestock or pets are suspected of being infected with NWS, contact the Mississippi Board of Animal Health at (601) 359-1170 and your veterinarian. Signs of NWS include draining or enlarging wounds and signs of discomfort. Also look for screwworm larvae (maggots) and eggs in or around body openings, such as the nose, ears, and genitalia or the navel of newborn animals.

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