June 24, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

On June 3, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed New World screwworm (NWS) larvae in a calf in Zavala County, Texas, approximately 60 miles from the southern border.[1] In the days since, USDA has confirmed additional cases in Texas and New Mexico. The arrival of NWS is unfortunate and was potentially preventable if certain programs and staff at USDA and across the government had been retained. The reality for ranchers and producers across the southwest is that NWS is here. The administration must now recommit to transparency and proactive communication with stakeholders and the public about the situation, while also taking appropriate steps to ensure that producers in border states are prepared and have the necessary tools to prevent further spread.

Across the livestock sector, producers and industry experts have made clear that they are prepared to work with USDA to eradicate this pest again. While NWS is not a food safety concern, it is vital that we protect animal health and American agriculture. Right now, in the face of this serious and quickly developing situation, ranchers and farmers want real solutions, not excuses or finger pointing. It is time to take responsibility for events that occur under your leadership and move forward to work to improve the situation. In line with that reality Congress requests the following information by July 1st, 2026:

- **Resources and staffing.** What personnel, equipment, and sterile-fly resources is the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) deploying to the ongoing response, including any resources drawn from the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program and the National Veterinary Stockpile? If detections multiply, is current staffing sufficient, and what is the surge plan? Please also provide current specific staffing levels for APHIS by mission area, including the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, APHIS Veterinary Services, and the border inspection workforce, including Tick Riders. Please identify any positions within APHIS that have been eliminated or relocated since January 20th, 2025. Further, please identify any positions that were eliminated and since restored within APHIS since January 20th, 2025. Did any employees who were working on NWS opt into the deferred resignation program? In 2025, the Trump administration cut funding for animal disease monitoring projects funded through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and operated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This included the termination of projects dedicated to monitoring and containment of NWS in Central America. What role did USDA have in the

1 U.S. Department of Agriculture, APHIS. (2026, June 3). *USDA confirms presence of New World screwworm in the United States*. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/news/agency-announcements/usda-confirms-presence-new-world-screwworm-united-states

cancellation of FAO grants or funding to other organizations or governments working to contain or surveil NWS?

- **Surveillance zones.** USDA has announced a 20-kilometer Infested Zone, and your Response Playbook also calls for an Adjacent Surveillance Zone and a Fly Surveillance Area reaching up to 200 kilometers. What zones, surveillance measures, or planning are now in effect for affected counties in Texas and New Mexico? Please include trapping density, inspection requirements, movement certificates, outreach to veterinarians and animal owners, and 14-day trace-back measures. Please also provide data on what samples from the trap network deployed along the border have shown, and what USDA has learned from the location of these detections about any gaps, blind spots, or limits in the existing surveillance network.

- **Wildlife surveillance.** Wildlife surveillance is often difficult, and white-tailed deer, exotic game, and feral hogs are abundant across the affected region. How is USDA APHIS Wildlife Services coordinating with the Department of the Interior and with state wildlife agencies such as Texas Parks and Wildlife, to conduct wildlife surveillance, manage infested carcasses, and keep wildlife from sustaining the outbreak?[2]

- **Human health.** What is the joint USDA-HHS plan, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state health departments, to monitor and prevent human cases?

- **Sterile fly supply.** USDA has activated the Moore Air Base sterile fly dispersal facility in Texas, but the country still depends on a single operating sterile fly production facility in Panama. USDA has projected that Mexico's Metapa facility will reach 60 to 100 million sterile flies per week once renovated and that the south Texas facility will reach 300 million per week, while estimated need is 400 to 500 million per week. When will the Moore Air Base production facility produce its first fly? What is USDA's interim plan to bridge the supply gap, and what additional resources or authorities are needed to meet demand? Has USDA validated modular, field-deployable SIT production units? And what is the status of NovoFly, the male-only genetically engineered strain developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service and now under Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review that could roughly double sterile-fly output, including any discussions with Mexican authorities about adopting it to strengthen the shared barrier?[3] Given that sterile fly dispersal is critical to stop the spread, and the Moore facility will not be operational for some time, for how long do you expect the current outbreak to persist?

- **Interstate movement and coordination with the states.** The detections are no longer confined to one county or one state. How is USDA coordinating with the Texas Animal Health Commission, New Mexico authorities, and State Animal Health Officials in the states that receive Texas and New Mexico cattle? What interstate movement and certification requirements now apply, and how will

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2 U.S. Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center. (2026). *Responding to New World screwworm in the U.S.* (supporting Department of the Interior wildlife preparedness and response). https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/preparing-potential-emergence-new-world-screwworm-us

3 Drovers. (2026, April). *Screwworm eradication: USDA's male-only fly breakthrough* (NovoFly, a male-only genetically engineered strain developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service, under EPA review). https://www.drovers.com/news/screwworm-eradication-usdas-male-only-fly-breakthrough

USDA ensure movement controls protect animal health without needlessly disrupting interstate commerce?

- **Border and trade.** Since the detection of NWS, Canada has issued partial import restrictions on U.S. livestock. Please outline how you are working with trade partners to ensure continuity of trade flows. How are you working with trade partners on regionalization agreements, and please provide assessments for the overall impact on beef and cattle trade.

- **Dairy.** Dairy cows produce milk every day that must be moved or dumped, so a quarantine harms a dairy from day one. The FDA has authorized treatments for lactating dairy cattle, including a May 2026 emergency use authorization for doramectin, but milk-discard and withdrawal periods carry real costs for producers. What is the USDA doing to ensure affordable, reliable access to treatments and support any quarantined dairies?

- **Economic Impact.** Based on the current situation and USDA modeling, what is the expected impact on the Texas and New Mexico economies and the broader cattle sector? In a recent economic analysis, the USDA estimated that a large outbreak in Texas could cost producers $1.8 billion. How does that estimate compare to an estimate for a more contained outbreak? What would a large outbreak in New Mexico or another state cost producers?

The United States eradicated New World screwworm once before through sustained federal leadership, scientific expertise, coordination with producers and states, and the resources necessary to meet the threat. USDA can succeed again with adequate staffing, reliable sterile-fly capacity, clear timelines, science-based movement protocols, and close coordination with state animal health officials and affected stakeholders. That response is essential to protect the health of the nation's livestock, safeguard producers' livelihoods, and drive this pest out again. We stand ready to work with you to ensure the federal response has the resources, coordination, and urgency needed to succeed.

Sincerely,

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture

Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
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