

Press Release

USDA Announces \$25 Million Commitment for New Arizona Sterile Fly Dispersal Facility, Secretary Rollins Visits Douglas Port of Entry

Secretary Rollins Announces USDA's Investment in AZ Sterile Fly Facility and Highlights Readiness Ahead of Douglas Port Reopening and Continued Aggressive Response to New World Screwworm

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(Washington, D.C., July 29, 2026) – Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced USDA's commitment to invest \$25 million toward the opening of a new sterile fly dispersal facility in Arizona to strengthen the nation's long-term response to New World screwworm (NWS). Secretary Rollins also visited the livestock inspection facilities at the Douglas, Arizona, Port of Entry, joined by Rep. Juan Ciscomani (AZ-06), Rep. Andy Biggs (AZ-05), Rep. Eli Crane (AZ-02), and Arizona Director of Agriculture Paul Brierley, highlighting the Department's extensive preparedness measures ahead of the planned reopening of the port to livestock trade on August 24.

"Protecting American agriculture begins with protecting our borders and ensuring we have the strongest animal health safeguards anywhere in the world. The Douglas Port of Entry will reopen only because USDA has implemented one of the most rigorous livestock inspection protocols in history, giving us confidence we can safely resume this critical trade while ensuring cattle crossing the border are free from New World screwworm," **said Secretary Rollins.** "At the same time, today's announcement marks another major investment in our long-term strategy to push this pest back into Mexico and ultimately

eradicate it from North America. Together with our partners in Arizona, we're strengthening the infrastructure needed to protect American ranchers for generations to come."

"Proud to join Secretary Rollins for today's announcement of the reopening of the Douglas Port of Entry alongside this critical investment in Arizona," **said Representative Juan Ciscomani (AZ-06)**. "Local agriculture leaders and I have been fighting to deliver this sterile fly dispersal facility because Arizona's livestock industry cannot afford to wait on the New World screwworm threat. This \$25 million investment is the direct result of that work, and I'm grateful to Secretary Rollins for listening to Arizona's producers and delivering on it. Her responsiveness and willingness to act swiftly on commonsense solutions has made a real difference. This is Secretary Rollins' second visit to Arizona in just a few months, reflecting her commitment to hearing directly from those on the ground and delivering real results for our farmers, ranchers, and rural communities."

Today's announcement advances USDA's aggressive strategy to strengthen sterile fly production and dispersal capacity. The proposed Arizona sterile fly dispersal facility would complement existing investments in Texas, Mexico, and Panama while improving the Department's ability to respond rapidly to NWS threats along the Southwest border. USDA will continue working closely with the Arizona Department of Agriculture and state leaders to identify the specific location and operational plan for the facility in Douglas, Arizona. Depending on the selected site and available infrastructure, construction could be completed in as little as several months.

APHIS and Arizona state personnel have maintained trapping operations near Douglas over the last year, submitting nearly 1,000 flies, none of which were identified as NWS by scientific experts. USDA and Arizona officials have also conducted extensive coordination exercises, preparedness planning, stakeholder outreach, and response training to ensure the state is ready to respond should the pest ever threaten the region.

Secretary Rollins received updates from USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) personnel responsible for implementing enhanced inspection protocols for each and every animal entering through Douglas once trade resumes. Under USDA's phased reopening plan announced last week, each animal will receive multiple veterinary inspections, including by USDA veterinarians before entering the United States. Any animal failing to meet APHIS import criteria will be denied entry, and detection of NWS would immediately halt imports through the facility.

Last week, USDA announced a coordinated, phased reopening of southern livestock ports contingent upon Mexico's continued adherence to the Joint Action Plan to combat NWS. Douglas was selected as the first port to reopen because Sonora maintains one of Mexico's strongest animal health systems and remains the lowest-risk state for NWS, while the Douglas facility is well positioned to implement USDA's enhanced inspection protocols. Following a successful reopening of Douglas and continued evaluation of disease risk, USDA will consider reopening the Santa Teresa and Columbus, New Mexico, ports.

USDA's reopening timeline remains contingent upon continued progress by Mexico and ongoing risk assessments. The Department will continue monitoring conditions closely and stand ready to pause or adjust reopening plans should the risk profile change. Protecting the American livestock industry remains USDA's highest priority.