



Champions Protect Their Pig



Resource of the Ohio Pork Council | June 2026

New World Screwworm

Understand It

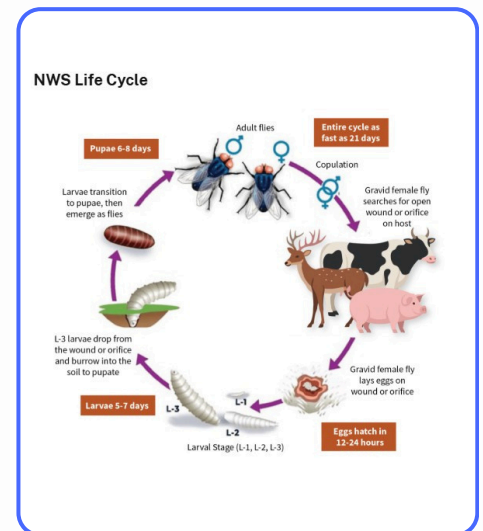
New World screwworm (NWS) is back in the U.S. for the first time in 60 years. It's a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals — including show pigs. This is unlike common fly maggots that feed on dead tissue, rotten feed, etc. NWS causes severe pain to the animal, which can lead to secondary infections and even death.

The life cycle of NWS can be as short as 21 days and requires a susceptible host. It thrives in warm environments and a hard freeze will end its life cycle.

The good news: it's preventable, it does not spread pig-to-pig, and it is not a food safety concern. The same daily habits that stop it protect your pig from a lot of other problems, too.

Currently, the USDA has a response plan activated.

Case numbers in the U.S. can change week to week. Scan the code at the bottom or visit screwworm.gov for the current status.



For youth exhibitors and their families, the mission is simple: Keep flies away from any wounds and avoid bringing unnecessary risk home to your pigs.

The 60-Second Version

- NWS larvae feed on living tissue. Any wound — even a small injection site — can attract the fly.
- Eggs hatch in hours. That's why you look over every animal, every day.
- It's not just pigs. NWS infects cattle, sheep, goats, horses, dogs, cats, and wildlife — and, rarely, people.
- You probably won't see the fly. You'll find maggots in a wound. A wound that grows instead of heals, or smells bad, is your red flag.
- Regular manure-based fly control does NOT stop NWS.
- Indoor barns are lower risk — but not no risk.
- See something? Isolate the pig, do not move it off your property, and call your vet right away.
- It is NOT a food safety concern.

“The best protection is simple — find and treat wounds early, control flies, and pay attention to your animals every day.”

—Dr. Andy Bowman,
OSU College of Vet.
Med.



New World Screwworm

How a Show Pig Gets NWS

- Adult screwworm flies are drawn to wounds — and on a show pig, those add up fast:
- Cuts and scrapes from loading, gating, and wash racks
- Scratches from gates, panels, sharp metal edges, or wiring
- Ear wounds from notching or fighting
- Unhealed castration sites
- The navel area on young pigs
- Injection-site irritation
- Any fresh or unhealed wound

The fly lays its eggs at the wound. The larvae hatch within hours and burrow into living tissue. That's why no wound is too small to take seriously.

It's Not Just Your Pig

Most show families keep more than pigs — a market lamb, a goat, a 4-H steer, a horse, the barn cat, the dog that rides along to every show. NWS infects all of them. The first U.S. cases this spring already include cattle, a goat, and a dog.

Any infested animal — or person — can draw more screwworm flies to your place and put your pig at risk. So protect the whole barn, not just the pig:

- Check every animal you own — sheep, goats, horses, cattle, rabbits, poultry, and pets — not just the pig.
- Treat every wound on every species right away — and cover your own.
- If any animal or person has a wound that won't heal or smells off, get it looked at by a vet or a doctor.

Spot It, Call Your Vet if You See

- A wound that gets bigger instead of heals
- A foul or unusual smell
- Drainage from a wound
- Visible larvae or maggots
- Loss of appetite, or a pig that seems down or depressed
- A pig rubbing, head-shaking, or fussing at one spot
- In severe cases, unexpected death

Isolate the pig immediately. Do NOT move it off your property. Call your vet — fast action protects your pig and Ohio's whole swine industry.

Additional Questions:

Ohio Pork Council: (614) 882-5887, Ext. 5
pork@ohiopork.org
Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, State
Veterinarian's Office: (614) 728-6220
or (888) 456-3405

Champion's Checklist

✓ **Check pigs every day.** A few minutes per pig. Look closely at cuts, scratches, ears, tail, skin sores, injection sites, and around the eyes, nose, and mouth. Be extra careful near gates, sharp edges, wiring, and wash racks. Early detection is your best defense.

✓ **Treat every wound immediately.** Even small ones. Clean and disinfect, follow your vet's advice, keep flies off it, and watch it heal. Healthy, healing skin is far less attractive to the fly.

✓ **Control flies.** NWS flies are not stopped by manure-based fly programs — use only NWS-approved products your vet recommends. Keep pens clean and dry, haul away manure and old bedding, kill standing water, and follow label directions.

✓ **Keep your gear clean.** Show whips, panels, brushes, buckets, shovels, trailers — knock off dirt, wash, disinfect when appropriate, and let everything dry before it comes home.

✓ **Be smart about bedding and supplies.** Buy bedding from trusted suppliers. Don't bring home used shavings, straw, or bedding from a show or another farm. Store supplies in a clean, dry place away from pets, wildlife, and pests.

✓ **Watch your pigs after every show, jackpot, or fair.** Commingling, shared wash racks, and travel all raise the odds of infection. Look every pig over when you get home, and keep checking daily for new wounds or irritation.

✓ **Mind your other animals, pets, and visitors.** Keep barn dogs, cats, and other animals in the barn healthy. Limit barn traffic, use clean footwear or boot covers, and don't share equipment between farms.

✓ **When in doubt, speak up.** See Something? Don't wait. Talk to your parent and herd veterinarian early.

Protecting your pig starts long before show day. Good care and biosecurity are how you're a champion every day.



screwworm.gov
Current U.S. status &
official info



Champion's Guide to
Biosecurity

