



For Immediate Release
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Texas New World Screwworm Response Team Formed to Amplify Preparedness

Formation of the Team Comes Following a Directive from Governor Abbott

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) are forming a joint response team to coordinate efforts in combating New World screwworm (NWS) prior to its arrival in Texas, following a directive by Governor Greg Abbott.

The Texas New World Screwworm Response Team will share essential information with stakeholders and the public, coordinate the state's preparedness and response efforts, and promote effective stakeholder engagement.

"Texans can be assured that staff have been actively preparing and training for a possible New World screwworm response for over a year," said Dr. Lewis R. "Bud" Dinges, TAHC executive director and state veterinarian. "While we hope we don't have to deal with the pest on our soil, joint efforts to mitigate damage and protect all commodities from NWS are ongoing and will be bolstered by this well-rounded team."

TAHC and TPWD have worked jointly for decades on disease management efforts to ensure the health and safety of livestock and wildlife in Texas.

"Excellent work has already been done by stakeholders, and state and federal agencies," said Dr. David Yoskowitz, TPWD executive director. "The charge of the response team is to work directly with landowners, livestock producers and the public. Both the Texas Animal Health Commission and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will bring forward all the resources and expertise at our disposal to ensure that we are prepared and can respond quickly and effectively."

In 2022, NWS broke through an established eradication border in Panama and began spreading north through Central America. NWS reached the southern states of Mexico in November 2024 and has continued to spread in multiple Mexican states as far north as Oaxaca. Due to Texas' vast border with Mexico, extensive animal agriculture industry and abundant wildlife, the risk of NWS reemergence in Texas is still of strong concern.

Understanding the heightened risk of NWS infestation Texas faces, TAHC has actively monitored the NWS spread in Central America. In March 2024, TAHC began developing plans, coordinating response, and training staff to respond to this threat. When NWS reached Mexico in November, the TAHC and TPWD began educating the public on this growing threat. TAHC and TPWD have continued to provide training and education for agency personnel, members of the public, veterinarians and stakeholders. While all these efforts have kept Texas ahead of the response curve, a formalized joint effort will help ensure preparedness and coordination between key partners during this critical time.



Read the Office of the Governor's press release [here](#). Learn more about NWS [here](#).

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.