

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

As members of the U.S. House of Representatives, we write to express our concerns regarding the outbreak and northward movement of a New World screwworm (NWS) infestation in Mexico. NWS presents a grave health and economic threat to America's livestock and wildlife industries. We respectfully request that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) work alongside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and manufacturing companies to identify and approve medical products for use in livestock to increase preparedness for the worst-case scenario of NWS' entry into the United States. Specifically, we urge HHS to evaluate the regulatory status of antiparasitic drugs under its jurisdiction and take steps to expedite labeling approvals for appropriate livestock applications.

As you may know, the New World Screwworm is a species of parasitic fly that deposits its larvae in the open wounds of warm-blooded animals, including pets and humans. While the parasite is typically found in South America, over the past year, a new infestation has moved north from Panama into Mexico, slowly approaching the U.S.-Mexico border. The economic cost of an NWS outbreak in the United States would be devastating, ranging from hundreds of millions to billions of dollars annually.¹

On June 18, 2025, USDA announced plans to build a sterile fly dispersal facility in South Texas and outlined a five-prong strategy to control and defeat the pest. The third prong of this plan emphasizes the need to "Maximize Our Readiness" by removing regulatory hurdles for wound and treatment products under the EPA and FDA's jurisdiction.² We believe close coordination is essential between HHS, EPA, and FDA to prepare for the worst and unlock the medicinal tools needed to defeat NWS.

Currently, there is an array of drugs and treatments for cattle that have proven to be effective treatments against NWS, but lack proper labeling for legal use. For example, macrocyclic lactones (e.g. ivermectin) are established as effective treatment options for livestock infested with NWS, but not all chemistries and routes of administration are approved for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and wildlife managers to use. Countries worldwide routinely use safe treatment protocols with all macrocyclic lactones and include different methods of administration. Additionally, other topical administration products with active ingredient categories such as permethrin can be useful tools if made available for treatment of NWS infestations. There are currently only two products labeled for use against NWS infestations, but many more have similar, if not exact active ingredients, modes of administration, and availability. Finally, a dry, powdered formulation of coumaphos is

¹ www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/nws-historical-economic-impact.pdf

² <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nws-visit-policy-brief.pdf>

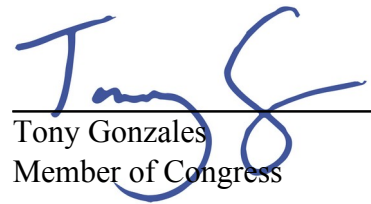
utilized in other countries to treat NWS infestations. This is a different active ingredient than those previously listed and would provide greater diversity in treatment options if approved for use in the U.S. These drugs may prove vital in the battle against NWS, but without appropriate labeling, veterinarians and producers are left without the legal clarity to deploy these treatments quickly in an outbreak scenario.

This is not the first time the United States has faced the NWS threat. Most recently, in September 2016, an NWS outbreak occurred among Key deer at a wildlife refuge on Big Pine Key in Monroe County. In response to that outbreak, HHS fast-tracked the approval of an oral administration of macrocyclic lactone doramectin to help save the wild deer population. We respectfully urge HHS to again utilize its emergency authority to fast-track labeling and approval processes—particularly for antiparasitic drugs with demonstrated safety and efficacy—and to coordinate actively with USDA and EPA in preparing for a potential outbreak. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



Derek Schmidt
Member of Congress



Tracey Mann
Member of Congress



Brian Babin
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Josh Brecheen
Member of Congress



Michael Guest
Member of Congress