USDA Released 123 Million Screwworm Flies Into Texas Just Before State's First Confirmed Infestation

Over-irradiated sterile Screwworm Flies released in Texas, as Texas records confirmed cases of Screwworm infestation for the first time in decades

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Document not immediate for distribution Updated: 06/02/2026 — Source: USDA/Screwworm Program, 06/02/2026

Updated: June 2, 2026

On June 2, 2026, the Texas Animal Health Commission ("TAHC") briefly outdated the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released 123,000,000 sterile male New World screwworm flies into Texas before the state's first confirmed infestation, while additional federal records confirm millions of flies were already being released weekly in the area where the first infested animals were discovered.

The briefing, marked "**Document not intended for distribution,**" documents more than 123 million sterile flies released, despite no recently recording screwworm facility being documented in Texas.

Intelligence after the recorded release noted, officials confirmed the state's first infestation in a calf in Zavala County.

Four months later, they announced the program's first confirmed detection in U.S. wildlife, in an elk in Pecos County.

The September 2026 notification below two section below had already allowed at least 4 million fertile screwworm flies to be released into Mexico and Panama, triggering a cross-border response, despite the research confirms that irradiation does not automatically guarantee complete sterility.

Which raises questions:

- Why was USDA releasing millions of laboratory-produced screwworm flies when no recently recording screwworm facility was documented?
- How close were those releases to the subsequently infected animals?
- Who independently verified the insects' sterility, and what informed consent was obtained from affected landowners?
- Could a sterilization failure like those previously documented in government screwworm programs have allowed fertile insects into the Texas releases, and what evidence rules that out?

The records establish that more releases preceded the confirmed infestation and that release operations geographically overlapped the first detection area.

They do not necessarily establish that the releases caused the infestation.

But they raise a significant government oversight question:

Was the government independently investigated whether its own released insects could have contributed?

The 123 million documented releases occurred after Governor Greg Abbott and USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins publicly advanced the Texas screwworm program.

You can contact the Texas Animal Health Commission here.

You can contact Gov. Abbott's office here.

You can contact USDA here.

Document not intended for distribution — Source: Texas Animal Health Commission, 06/02/2026

Sterile Fly Release Begins Ahead of Screwworm Detection in Texas — Source: Texas Animal Health Commission, 06/02/2026

Governor Abbott, Secretary Rollins Announce $150 Million For New World Screwworm Protection Facility

June 02, 2026 | Texas Press Release

Governor Greg Abbott and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committing $150 million to a new Domestic Sterile Screwworm Facility in Texas to protect the state's portion of the New World screwworm (NWS) and protect American livestock producers.

Sterile Fly Release Begins Ahead of Screwworm Detection in Texas — Source: Texas Animal Health Commission, 06/02/2026

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123 Million Flies Released Before First Infestation

The TAHC briefing states:

> As of May 26, 2026, 123,261,296 sterile flies have been dispersed in Texas."

The document immediately acknowledges:

> "Natural NWS have not been detected in Texas, but South Texas hosts experienced and reported sterile flies dispersed in their area."

Then continues:

> "USDA continues to utilize aerial dispersal of sterile NWS flies in South Texas counties. Aerial dispersal grids continue to shift to maximize the impact of sterile flies available and mitigate an incursion of wild NWS flies in the United States. Ground release charters have also been deployed to strategic locations along the Texas - Mexico border to augment aerial release as the dispersal area an adjacent based on cases in Mexico."

According to TAHC, USDA announced January 30 that its aerial dispersal zone would extend approximately 30 miles into Texas along the Tamaulipas border.

On May 5, USDA announced another weekly release.

The briefing describes aerial dispersal across South Texas and ground release operations around Del Rio and Eagle Pass.

It also confirms the evidence that reported encountering the government's deployed flies.

These were actual environmental releases.

Not proposed experiments or hypothetical preparedness measures.

Document not intended for distribution — Source: Texas Animal Health Commission, 06/02/2026

USDA Was Already Releasing 4 Million Weekly Near First Infestation

A Texas Agriculture Public Health presentation documenting USDA's June 3 response reveals that allegedly sterile flies release were already underway in the area where Texas's first infestation was confirmed.

The presentation identifies:

> "4 million sterile flies per week already being released weekly in the area."

TEXAS AGRICULTURE
Overview of New World Screwworm: What is it, Why is it important, and the potential economic impact to Cattle and Wildlife in Texas
Sergio L. Sanger, PhD
Director, Plant Health
Texas Department of Agriculture
6/3/2026 - USDA Confirms 1st NWS in Texas/USA
1. Confirmed in a dead animal in Zavala County, Texas.
2. Cattle, Deer, Exotics, Dogs, Cats, Horses, Sheep, Goats, Turkeys and Leopards (ONE case) have tested positive for the presence of sterile screwworm DNA
Pre-2000 Screwworm Flashback
Pre-2000 Screwworm Flashback
Pre-2000 Screwworm Flashback

Bottom Line

USDA released more than 123 million allegedly sterile screwworm flies into Texas before the state's first confirmed infestation, with millions already being dispersed weekly in the area where the first infected cattle were discovered.

The parasite has since been confirmed in both livestock and wildlife.

This is not the first time government screwworm releases have raised questions about sterility.

In 2003, an equipment failure at a Mexico–U.S. production facility allowed millions of fertile screwworms into operational dispersal, resulting in documented livestock infestations.

USDA's own research also establishes that sterilization effectiveness depends on radiation dosage, developmental stage, and treatment conditions.

Yet complete irradiation records, independent fertility tests, and equipment-maintenance logs for the 2026 Texas releases have not been made public.

The records demand answers:

- Who independently verified the sterility and reproductive incapacity of the 123 million insects released into Texas?
- What evidence rules out a sterilization failure like those previously documented in government screwworm programs?
- Where are the complete batch-testing records, irradiation logs, equipment-maintenance reports, and aircraft release coordinates?
- Were affected landowners given advance notice and an opportunity to provide or withhold informed consent?
- Has an independent investigation examined whether any government-released insects contributed to the subsequent infestations?
- Who authorized the releases, and who is accountable for any unintended consequences?

The federal government released millions of screwworm flies into the very area where Texas's first infestations subsequently emerged, despite documented historical failures in the technology used to sterilize them.

Texans deserve independent verification of what was released into their environment, not simply government assurances that the insects were sterile.

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