



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

TDA SCREWWORM RESPONSE

The reemergence of the New World screwworm is one of the most serious threats Texas livestock producers have faced in decades. This parasite spreads rapidly through wounds in livestock and wildlife, causing devastating losses if left unchecked. The new sterile fly production facility will serve as a powerful long-term safeguard, but time is of the essence. To protect producers today and prevent a nationwide outbreak, the Texas Department of Agriculture is moving swiftly to support fast-acting, innovative control methods that complement the proven Sterile Insect Technique and help ensure the permanent eradication of this devastating pest.

TDA Swormlure

Developed by Commissioner Sid Miller's Biosecurity team, TDA Swormlure is a cutting-edge attractant built with a proprietary polymer and chemical blend. Early field tests in Panama, conducted by USDA-APHIS, have shown it outperforming existing tools. Unlike traditional surveillance methods, Swormlure can be rapidly scaled across Texas, representing an innovative and proactive step.



Pesticide Bait

Pesticide baits remain the most immediate line of defense. Historically, Dichlorvos was used to eradicate flies, killing up to 90% of flies on contact. When paired with monitoring systems such as TDA Swormlure, they buy ranchers and veterinarians valuable time to stop outbreaks before they spread. Dichlorvos is proven highly effective, but alternatives are available for flexibility.

Inoculation

A platform vaccine is under rapid development (5–8 months) to build protection directly into livestock. This non-mRNA technology alters proteins in the animal's blood, preventing screwworm eggs from developing into larvae. Already successful in trials for ticks, it shows strong promise against screwworm. Once deployed, ranchers will have a powerful built-in shield to protect their herds before infection occurs.



Ivermectin

Unlike during past outbreaks, ivermectin is now available as both an injection and a pour-on treatment, working as both a prevention and a cure for screwworm myiasis. TDA is pursuing approval for use as a feed additive, allowing broad herd coverage. This tool can also safeguard wildlife such as high-fence deer, closing off pathways for the pest to spread beyond livestock.

