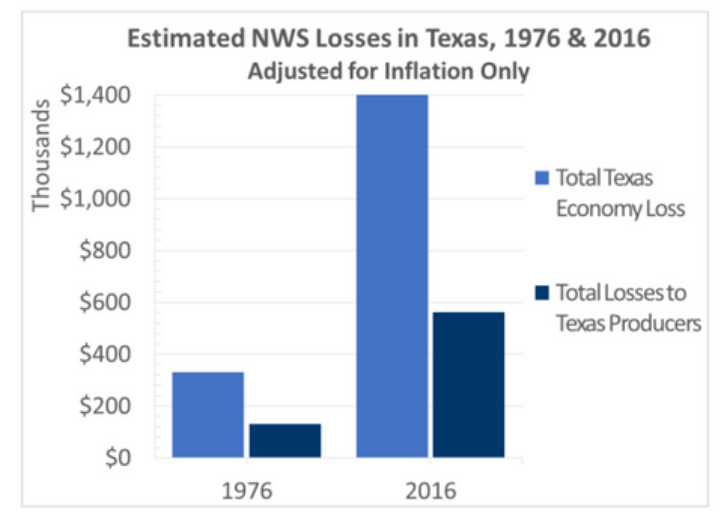
NEW WORLD SCREWWORM ERADICATION

History & Eradication in the U.S.

The United States successfully eradicated NWS in the 1960s using the sterile insect technique (SIT). This groundbreaking method involved releasing sterilized male flies into the environment, which mated with wild females, effectively breaking the reproductive cycle. The eradication campaign saved the U.S. livestock industry and U.S. economy millions of dollars and is celebrated as one of the most successful pest control programs in history. To prevent reinfestation, a buffer zone in Panama was established, and monitoring programs remain in place to ensure early detection.

Economic Impact

Eradication previously cost $750 million, which is a staggering number, but still cheaper than the economic losses that occurred because of the screw worm in the 60s. To prevent the resurgence of NWS in the U.S., it will cost more today than it did 60 years ago. However, it is still cheaper to fund those eradication and containment efforts than to suffer the economic losses that would result if the NWS was reintroduced to Texas & the U.S.



Screwworm Lifecycle

The New World screwworm is a fly that has a particularly gory way of harming mammals. Female NWS flies lay their eggs in open wounds or body orifices and when the larvae hatch, they burrow deep into the skin like a screw driving into wood. These maggots feed on living tissue, causing larger wounds as they go. Humans and all warm-blooded animals, including cattle, horses, deer, cats and dogs are susceptible to infection.

Devastation to the Cattle Industry

Pest outbreaks, like an outbreak of the NWS, can result in staggering economic losses for the livestock industry & producers. Hardworking ranchers and producers experienced a 42% loss of profit in 1976 due to death loss in a herd. And, according to a USDA report in 2016, Texas producers were estimated to lose $561 million in the case of a NWS outbreak.

Labor Shortage Impact

Screwworm treatment for infested livestock is extremely labor intensive and requires ranch staff riding through cattle daily providing treatment to open wounds and infections. While boots on the ground in the 60s was effective, that will not be the case today. The cow to ranch hand ratio is much higher than it was 50 years ago. As a result, it will be more difficult to provide critical care in a timely and effective manner to livestock.

Risk to Non-Bovine Animals

NWS poses an even higher risk to wildlife than livestock from a mortality stand point. Texas wildlife, including white-tailed deer, were decimated by the NWS in the 60s. Not only did Texas lose native wildlife in vast numbers, hunting and other activities crucial to Texas' economy suffered. Compared to the 60's, today's larger wildlife population pose new challenges. The expansive, home ranging Nilgai make NWS detection difficult. Feral hogs reproduce twice a year, creating ideal conditions for infestation in these populations. Overall, a NWS outbreak today would spread more quickly and cause more damage to Texas wildlife.

Where We Stand

The continued existence of the screwworm in remote foreign areas has presented a constant threat to the U.S. and its cattle herd. TSCRA supports eradication activities with the use of appropriate resources to protect the U.S. and ensure foreign and domestic efforts are successful.

919 Congress Ave. Ste 750 Austin, TX 76185 512.469.0171 tscra.org