



Healthy in, healthy out: making sure your sale doesn't spread pests or disease

New World Screwworm (NWS) threat exists

The New World Screwworm is a fly native to regions around the equator and capable of laying destructive maggots that burrow into an animal's wounds, which can lead to the animals' death. The fly has been on the move in recent months and is advancing northward through Mexico. NWS doesn't move fast or far on its own, and livestock movements are the main risk allowing it to rapidly spread. The fly and its maggots can survive many months of the year in Minnesota, and you should be on alert for the signs.

What to watch for on livestock

The most common method of spotting this pest is finding the maggots. NWS flies lay eggs on or around wounds and the maggots begin to burrow in a matter of days. Outward signs on affected animals include open wounds, foul smell, irritated behavior and rotted tissue. The maggots are usually beneath the skin so finding the wound and notifying the vet are the best ways to react if you spot something suspicious.



Source: CDC

Why this matters at markets

Livestock markets are great places that bring animals together for sale. The downside to the bustle of cattle and other animals moving across the sale floor is it's a prime place for something like NWS to spread quickly. One female fly is capable of laying hundreds of eggs in a short amount of time. Additionally, livestock markets sell animals from many different places and some cattle could be imported for the sale from areas where the threat of the NWS is even bigger.

Spot the fly, stop the spread

If you see open wounds on an animal at the market, notify the market vet right away. Market vets should get in touch with their local Board of Animal Health or USDA inspector immediately if they suspect a wound contains NWS larvae.

