Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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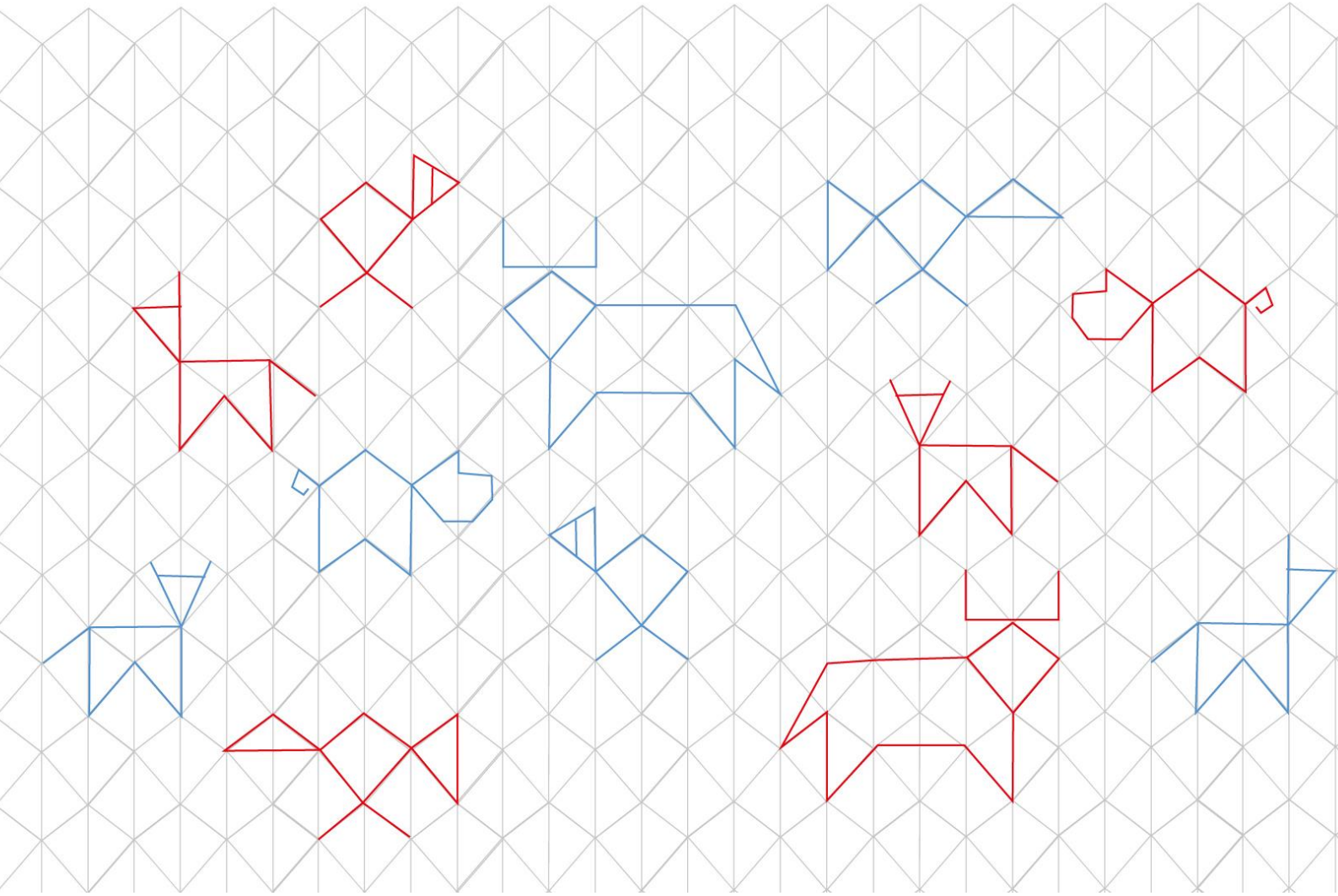
Second Meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on New World Screwworm (SGE–NWS), virtual modality

Report

October 9, 2025



Second Meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on New World Screwworm (SGE–NWS) Report

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Abbreviations

CAHFSA: Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency

CENSA: National Center for Agricultural Health

COPEG: Panama–U.S. Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of New World Screwworm

CVP: Permanent Veterinary Committee

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

NWS: New World Screwworm

OIRSA: International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health

SG-CAN: General Secretariat of the Andean Community

SGE: Standing Group of Experts

WOAH: World Organisation for Animal Health

Executive Summary

The Second Meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on New World Screwworm (SGE–NWS) was held virtually on October 9, with the aim of strengthening regional coordination in response to the epidemiological situation of myiasis caused by Cochliomyia hominivorax, a growing threat to animal, human, and wildlife health in the Americas.

The meeting brought together nominated experts from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United States, Mexico, Panama, national veterinary authorities, and representatives from international organizations including FAO, WOAH, OIRSA, IICA, IAEA, CAHFSA, CVP, SG–CAN, reference centers such as COPEG and CENSA, and technical specialists.

Dr. Francisco D'Alessio (WOAH Regional Representative), Dr. Andrés González (Livestock Development Officer, FAO RLC), and Dr. Conrad Estrada (Chair of GF-TADs for the Americas) welcomed participants, emphasizing the urgency of joint and strategic action against a disease that has shown accelerated expansion over the past two years.

A recap of the First Meeting of the SGE–NWS held in April 2025 was presented. Key topics discussed included: Regional epidemiological situation of NWS, Successful experience and challenges of public–private partnerships in NWS control, Role of companion animals in the spread of NWS, Importance of movement control as a tool for NWS eradication.

The meeting reaffirmed the need for a coordinated, multisectoral, evidence-based response to the spread of New World Screwworm. The SGE is consolidating itself as a key technical platform to coordinate regional efforts, share best practices, and generate strategic recommendations to strengthen animal health in the Americas.

Key Discussion Points

Background of the SGE–NWS

The group was officially established in March 2024 following several regional meetings that highlighted the need for a permanent technical body. The first meeting in April 2025 defined objectives such as:

- Validating the group's operational dynamics
- Analyzing priority intervention measures
- Promoting a regional action plan with short-, medium-, and long-term goals
- Coordinating actions in reinfested and endemic areas

Regional Epidemiological Situation

Dr. Paolo Tizzani (WOAH) presented a detailed analysis of the disease's evolution from 2005 to 2025. Key findings included:

- Over 15,000 outbreaks were reported in 2024, representing 75% of the total cases in the past 20 years
- More than 11,000 outbreaks have been recorded so far in 2025
- The disease has expanded into Central America and northern South America
- The importance of combining official reporting (WAHIS) with epidemiological intelligence tools (EIOS) was emphasized, as these help detect rumors, misinformation, and unreported outbreaks
- The proposal to develop periodic regional epidemiological reports was made to improve decision-making, and the importance of timely reporting to WOAH was reiterated

Successful Experience and Challenges of Public–Private Partnerships in NWS Control

Dr. Wilmer Juárez, Director of Animal Health at IPSA Nicaragua, shared his country's experience in facing a significant reemergence of the disease:

- Since March 2024, over 23,000 animal cases and 181 human cases have been confirmed
- An integrated strategy was implemented, including:
    - Active and passive surveillance
    - Mass health education
    - Animal movement control with 13 inspection points
    - Free distribution of larvicides
    - Public–private and interinstitutional partnerships
    - Technical training and diagnostic strengthening
- Technical personnel visited over 126,000 farms and treated more than 163,000 animals, preventing larval spread

Role of Companion Animals in the Spread of NWS

Dr. Montserrat Jiménez, Supervisor of the NWS Program at OIRSA Costa Rica, presented a standardized protocol for managing myiasis in companion animals, especially dogs and cats, which have proven to be significant vectors:

- Pets are among the species with the highest number of NWS cases in reinfested regions
- Wounds are classified into four grades, from mild lesions to critical cases requiring euthanasia
- Training of technicians and veterinarians is promoted, along with coordination with private clinics
- A warning was issued regarding the inappropriate use of toxic larvicides in felines, such as pyrethroids
- Studies were presented on preventive and curative treatments, including the use of tablets (Credelio, Simparica) and species-specific larvicides

Importance of Movement Control as a Tool for NWS Eradication

Dr. Marcela Marchelli, Regional Coordinator of the USDA–APHIS/OIRSA NWS Prevention, Control, and Eradication Project, addressed one of the critical pillars in disease spread: the movement of animals and people.

Risk factors identified included high border permeability and irregular livestock movement. Proposed measures included:

- Establishment of permanent and standardized control posts
- Territorial divisions into epidemiological zones
- Electronic traceability systems
- Awareness campaigns for producers and transporters
- Regional cooperation to harmonize export protocols
- Incorporation of effective technologies such as infrared cameras and artificial intelligence
- Examples of best practices in Mexico were presented, including the use of canine detection teams and inspection arches at control posts

Emerging Issues and recommendations

Key issues requiring urgent attention emerged during the discussion:

- **Resistance to larvicides:** The need for studies on resistance and product efficacy was highlighted
- **Food safety:** It was recommended to include these medications in national residue and contaminant surveillance programs to monitor active ingredients that may pose food safety risks
- **Private sector participation:** It was proposed to invite producers and industry representatives to future meetings
- **Review of international standards:** A suggestion was made to consider updating the WOAH Terrestrial Code chapter on myiasis caused by Cochliomyia hominivorax, particularly regarding surveillance and movement control.

Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a commitment to:

- Follow up on the regional action plan
- Strengthening epidemiological intelligence
- Review of national and international regulations
- Promote active private sector participation

The group agreed to remain active between meetings, facilitating the exchange of information, experiences, and technical resources.

This document has been produced under the umbrella of

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