

Screw-Worm Fly Surveillance and Preparedness Program

2024-25 Communique



Old World and New World screw-worm fly (SWF) — *Chrysomya bezziana* and *Cochliomyia hominivorax*, respectively — are exotic to Australia. They cause serious animal health and animal production issues, as well as public health issues, in tropical and sub-tropical regions overseas through myiasis (maggot infestation).

The Screw-Worm Fly Surveillance and Preparedness Program (SWFSPP) conducts targeted surveillance and awareness activities. It supports entomological capability to detect a potential incursion early enough to ensure a high likelihood of success of an eradication program.

For more information about the program, visit [Monitoring for screw-worm fly - Animal Health Australia](#).¹

¹ animalhealthaustralia.com.au/monitoring-for-swf



SWFSPP SC Members: starting from the left to right (Rhys Powell - NSW – Southern Jurisdiction representative; Geoff Brown - Qld. Gov - Reference Entomologist; Kathleen Moylan - NT. Gov; Mikhaila Nye - AHA; Niamh Pilatti - Cattle Australia - livestock industry representative; Sheaz Sakur - AHA; Selina Ossedryver - Qld. Gov.; Bronwyn Hendry - AHA; Fiona Knox - NAQS and Will Janson - WA. Gov.

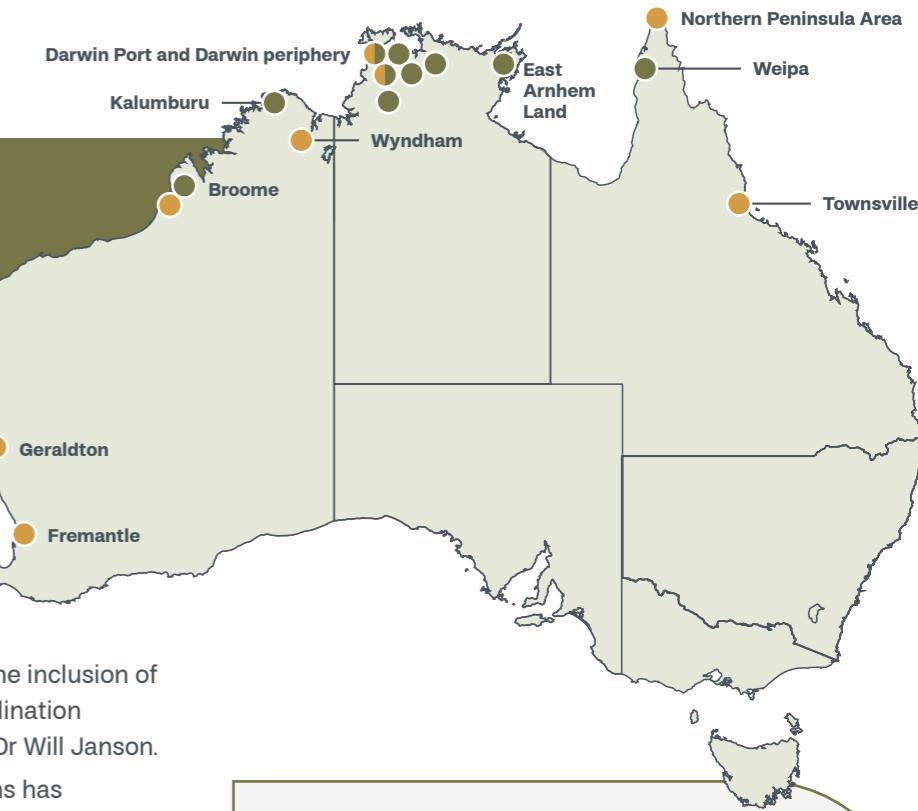
2025 SWFSPP Steering Committee Meeting

The SWFSPP Steering Committee met at Berrimah Farm in Darwin on 9 September 2025. During the meeting, the committee reviewed trapping and myiasis surveillance activities undertaken throughout 2024–25. They also welcomed Niamh Pilati from Cattle Australia as the livestock industry representative and Fiona Knox as the representative for the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy.

Screw-worm fly surveillance summary 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Detection method	Total effort	Number SWF detected
Adult fly trapping	265 trap collections	0 flies
Myiasis inspections	7675 cattle inspected	0 larvae

Myiasis Monitoring and Fly Trapping Locations



Communications and Awareness

- SWF awareness has increased through the inclusion of maggot kits in Northern Australian Coordination Network surveillance kits, developed by Dr Will Janson.
- Engagement with wildlife health clinicians has strengthened passive myiasis surveillance, supported by ongoing collaboration with Wildlife Health Australia and jurisdictional wildlife coordinators.
- The Committee discussed improvements to surveillance materials, including adding QR codes to maggot kits to enhance tracking and sample submissions.

Diagnostic, Research and Future Developments

- The Committee discussed the ongoing New World screw-worm fly outbreak in Mexico and Central America focusing on its impact, spread, and potential measures for control and mitigation.
- Feasibility of genomic research on international SWF is being investigated by the Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory in Queensland. This work would aim to improve outbreak tracing, inform control strategies, identify resistance traits, and support sterile insect technique programs by sourcing genetically compatible flies.
- A Master of Applied Epidemiology scholar working with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is evaluating the SWFSPP. Outputs are expected to inform future program improvements.
- A key challenge identified is the submission and testing of human myiasis samples, as SWF is not notifiable in humans.

Entomology Workshop - 10th September

The triannual SWFSPP entomology workshop took place the day after the Committee meeting. It gathered over 20 entomologists from the Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales, and the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy.

Led by Geoff Brown, the program's reference entomologist, the workshop focused on identifying SWF at all life-cycle stages and differentiating them from similar species. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: 100% of attendees found the workshop relevant and useful. 92% felt confident in identifying SWF or knowing who to contact for assistance.

