

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

On behalf of Farm Bureau members nationwide, we thank you for your continued efforts to deliver results for America's hardworking farmers and ranchers.

Under your leadership, USDA is delivering on its promise to fight the New World Screwworm by completing the sterile fly distribution facility in South Texas, leveraging USDA's ability to connect entrepreneurs and industry leaders with federal dollars to enhance sterile fly production, and developing new and innovative traps, lures, treatments, therapeutics and tools to drive response and preparedness. By trusting the science, USDA can make decisions that ultimately protect the health and economic viability of the U.S. cattle herd.

Over the last year, USDA made tough decisions regarding the status of the border with Mexico. On June 30, 2025, USDA announced a science-based approach to reopening the border starting in the West, where the environment for NWS is not as favorable, and moving eastward over the course of several months. Unfortunately, just days later, on July 9, 2025, it was announced that the border would close again due to a new case of NWS in Veracruz, Mexico, just 370 miles south of our border. We commend you for taking this swift action to further protect the U.S. cattle herd and the farmers and ranchers who raise them.

To date, the northernmost active case of NWS is only 70 miles south of the U.S. border with Mexico. This is too close for comfort. USDA's ability to drop sterile flies in affected areas is greatly appreciated, as is Mexico's willingness to participate in controlling this destructive pest. However, given reports that Mexico is dealing with over 600 active cases¹, Farm Bureau believes that Mexico is unable to effectively control NWS at this time. Given this reality, we respectfully request that USDA take all necessary actions to protect the health and economic viability of the domestic herd, including keeping the border closed until Mexico can demonstrate that they are

¹ <https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/news/business-inputs/article/2026/02/10/texas-nws-fly-dispersal-facility#:~:text=Adis%20Dijab%2C%20acting%20associate%20deputy,movement%20of%20cattle%20in%20Mexico.>

capable of controlling NWS or controlling the movement of this pest to eliminate its threat to U.S. agriculture.

Our members recognize that the decisions USDA has made do not come easy, and most importantly, have remained grounded in sound science. We understand the tremendous economic hardship occurring among those involved in the cattle trade along the southern border, but the hardships will have a far greater impact if a positive case of NWS is confirmed on U.S. soil for the first time in over 50 years. It won't just be cattle that are impacted. Other livestock and wildlife species will be at risk.

Farm Bureau encourages USDA to remain steadfast in its core mission to help and protect farmers and ranchers of all sizes and base decisions on sound science. We greatly appreciate everything USDA has accomplished thus far, and we look forward to the success of the new sterile fly production facility in south Texas.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zippy Duvall". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Zippy Duvall
President