

Screwworm Cases Reported Light During Past Year

WASHINGTON (AP) — Only 219 confirmed cases of screwworm infestation in livestock were reported last year, the lowest tally on record, the Agriculture Department reported today.

This compared with a serious outbreak of 9,878 cases in 1968. The best previous year was 1964 when 403 cases were reported.

Texas had 161 cases in 1969; Arizona 32; New Mexico 18; and California 8, the department said.

"We are on top of the screwworm situation and with the help of southwestern ranchers we can stay there," said Dr. E. E. Saulmon, head of the Agricultural Research Service animal health division.

Since 1962, the United States and Mexico have been waging a screwworm eradication war using sterile flies which breed, lay unfertilized eggs in open wounds in livestock but produce no larvae-screwworms-which can cripple or kill the animals.

Saulmon said the additional \$1.4 million provided by Congress last spring enabled the program to operate fully during the remainder of the year.

Some 6,71 sterile screwworm flies were released last year in a barrier zone over the southwestern states and northern Mexico.