

Facts about Feral Hogs

* The first swine in Texas were probably brought by early Spanish explorers more 300 years ago.

* During Texas' war for independence, many hogs escaped or were released, as settlers fled to the United States or to Mexico for safety.

* In the 1930's "Russian boars," or European wild hogs were introduced into the state for hunting. Most of these hogs escaped from the game ranches and began breeding with feral hogs. Few, if any, European wild hogs remain.

* Texas has about a million feral hogs. They appear more muscular than domestic hogs and vary in color pattern. Mature feral hogs can reach a shoulder height of three feet and weigh between 100 and 400 pounds.

* A tough shoulder hide typically develops in feral hogs. This "shield" is made of scar tissue formed from frequent fighting. As the animal gets older, this area becomes tougher.

* The feral hogs travel in family groups of two sows and their young, which can number four to a dozen for each sow, depending on conditions. Boars join the group to breed.

* Young lambs and kid goats, turkey, quail and ground-nesting birds fall prey to feral hogs. They also damage crops and can tear up livestock and wildlife feeders and watering facilities.

* Feral hogs can carry pseudorabies, swine brucellosis, tuberculosis, bubonic plague, tularemia, trichinosis and anthrax, in addition to parasites, including ticks, worms, fleas and lice.

* Feral hog meat is very lean and tasty. (Meat from older boars tend to be rank, however.) Like any pork, the meat should be well cooked before being eaten.

(Facts about feral hogs were adapted with permission from "The Feral Hog in Texas," booklet published by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Fisheries and Wildlife Division.)

For more information, contact your nearest Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) office at:

or the Austin headquarters at 1-800-550-8242.

Find the TAHC on the "web," at www.tahc.state.tx.us

Questions or comments?

Email us at comments@tahc.state.tx.us

"Because Animal Health Matters"

Texas Animal Health Commission

Regulations For Trapping or Moving Feral (Wild) Swine



Feral Swine Hunting--A Popular Sport

Hunters enjoying their sport on ranch leases often shoot feral (wild) swine as a secondary target to deer and other seasonal game.

Feral hogs are actually domestic hogs that have escaped or were released, but with each generation, the hogs develop more traits needed for survival in the wild.

Hunting these hogs has become so popular, some ranchers hire trappers to catch and transport the animal from other sites to keep their ranches stocked.

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has regulations to reduce the risk of feral swine spreading disease to domestic livestock or to humans. The TAHC is concerned most about two diseases: brucellosis, a bacterial disease; and pseudorabies, a virus.

Swine Diseases a Danger to Humans and Livestock

Brucellosis causes reproductive problems in infected swine and can be passed from boars to sows. Infection also can be transmitted to humans through blood contact, which can occur during butchering.

Feral swine can, on rare occasions, infect cattle with swine brucellosis, causing to react positively on brucellosis tests. This can result in diagnostic problems requiring additional laboratory testing and possible herd restrictions before the diagnosis is certain and the cattle can be released.

Pseudorabies poses no threat to humans, but swine can transmit it to other animals. Infected cattle, dogs, cats, and other animals die but do not spread the disease. Infected adult swine typically develop only flu-like symptoms, but young pigs under a month of age can have severe respiratory

and digestive symptoms and may die within three or four days after contracting the disease.

According to a survey of slaughter plant blood samples, about a third of feral swine tested positive for pseudorabies.

Regulations Cover Trapping and

Movement of Feral Swine

The TAHC's feral swine regulations are intended to prevent the spread of these diseases. As Texas eliminates brucellosis and pseudorabies from domestic herds, this becomes particularly important. If reinfection is not prevented, other states may view Texas's livestock as potential disease carriers.

Feral swine trapped on a premise are to be tested negative for brucellosis and pseudorabies within 30 days before they are moved to a game preserve or site where they will be maintained for hunting. An accredited veterinarian must draw the blood samples for the tests, at the owners expense.

The tests prior to movement are not required if the swine are taken directly to a slaughter facility or to a livestock market for sale or slaughter. At the livestock market, the feral swine must be held in isolation, under quarantine, and be moved only to slaughter with a permit issued by the TAHC livestock market inspector.

Feral Swine Holding Facility

These are pens inspected/approved by TAHC to hold swine from the time of trapping until moving them to slaughter.

Conditions:

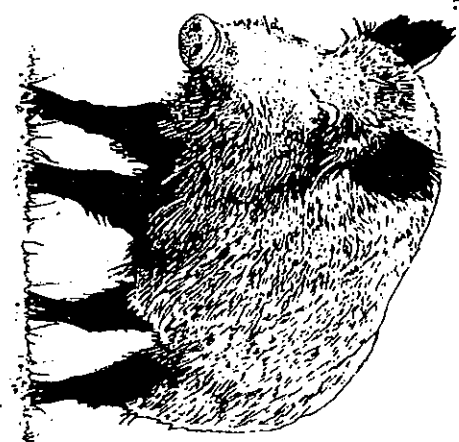
1. No domestic swine may be penned or maintained within 1.5 miles of the feral swine holding facility.

2. The holding facility is to be double fenced, with fences four feet apart. No animals are to be kept in the space between the two fences.

3. The facility is for feral swine **ONLY**.

4. These swine will go **DIRECTLY** to slaughter from the facility.

5. Dealer records must be maintained and include the number of swine handled, dates the animals were moved in or out, and the ranches where they were trapped. Records are also to include the name and location of the slaughter facility where the swine were delivered.



Safety for Hunters

When field-dressing feral swine, hunter should take precautions to avoid potential exposure to swine brucellosis or other diseases. Hunter should wear gloves and avoid getting swine blood in any open wound or skin lesion when handling the swine carcass.

If the meat is thoroughly cooked, it is safe to eat. The National Pork Producers Association recommends that pork products be cooked to and internal temperature of 160 degrees F.