



## Feral Hog Approved Holding Facility Guidelines in Texas



Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

**Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) are non-native, highly adaptable, and cause significant ecological and economic damage in Texas.**



**Figure 1.** Feral hogs are known for their destructive rooting behavior, as they forage for food. This act can be devastating to pastures, row crops, and wildlife habitat. (Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

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### Introduction

Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) have become a major problem in Texas, with an estimated 2.6 million head causing approximately \$52 million in agriculture damage, annually (Figure 1). The overall cost is under estimated, as losses associated with lawns, landscaping and irrigation damage in suburban areas is not known, but growing. They are capable of carrying and transmitting diseases to livestock, wildlife, and humans, having potential additional negative economic impacts.

Feral hogs are a non-native invasive species classified as unmarked exotic livestock in Texas. Because of this designation, they are not owned by anyone until control is expressed. One way for landowners to

express control of feral hogs is trapping. Once feral hogs have been trapped the transportation of live animals is regulated by the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC).

Landowners can earn income from feral hogs by leasing land to hunters, by selling live animals of both sexes to approved holding facilities, and selling males to authorized hunting preserves. Reproductive maturity in female feral hogs ranges from 5-14 months and they can produce up to two litters per year with an average of 5-6 piglets per litter. Because of their high reproductive capabilities, females may not be released. Only male feral hogs may be transported and released within an authorized hunting preserve.



**Figure 2.** Feral hogs are weighed and sold to approved holding facilities on a price per pound basis. (Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

Approved holding facilities are regulated by the TAHC, however they are not involved in the purchase transaction or price set by the operator. Prices vary by region and over time. Currently, live sale prices are around \$0.10-\$0.20 per pound for feral hogs weighing up to 100 lbs, \$0.30 cents per pound for animals between 100 and 150 lbs, and \$0.60 cents per pound for feral hogs 150 lbs and heavier (Figure 2). This income may help to offset damage costs caused by feral hogs. Approved holding facilities temporarily hold feral hogs until a full truck load can be assembled and transported to a processing facility or authorized hunting preserve. At this time there are two feral hog processing facilities in Texas and most processed meat is sold and shipped to overseas markets.

### **Facility Guidelines**

The TAHC requires approved holding facility fences to be constructed with doubled swine-proof fencing

that is continually maintained by the owner/operator to prevent escape (Figure 3). The doubled fences must be at least four feet apart with no animals allowed in the space between the fences. Any change from these fence guidelines must be approved by the TAHC Executive Director upon recommendation of the TAHC Regional Director. In addition to guidelines for fence construction, the holding facility is required to be greater than 200 yards away from any domestic swine pens. Only feral hogs can be placed in the facility. This reduces interaction and potential disease transmission between domestic and non-domestic animals. Feral hogs must not be fed restricted garbage (meat, meat scraps, or a mixture of meat products or by-products with other scraps), unrestricted garbage (vegetables, fruits, dairy products, or baked goods), or waste as defined in Chapters 165 and 55.3 of the TAHC Texas Administrative Code. Additionally, if a feral hog dies in an approved holding facility it must



**Figure 3.** Feral hog approved holding facilities are double fenced to prevent escape. (Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

be promptly removed from the facility and disposed of in accordance with any applicable requirements, or ordinances, or at the direction of the TAHC.

#### **Approved Holding Facility Record Keeping**

Records must be kept and maintained by the owners and/or operators of the approved holding facility for five years and must be available to the TAHC upon request. Records should include the dates of purchase and number of feral hogs that were placed in and removed from the approved holding facility. Additionally, approximate weight, size, color, sex and any existing applied identification (ear tags, ear notches, etc.) for each feral hog should be recorded (Figure 4). Also, the location where the animals were trapped and the location receiving feral hogs (approved holding facility) must be recorded.

#### **Application to Become an Approved Holding Facility**

The application for an approved holding facility can be obtained from the TAHC regional office, or TAHC headquarters, and must include the following: name, address, and telephone number of applicant. Also the facility name, physical location, county, directions to the facility, and telephone number should be included in the application. Additionally, it is important to have a diagram of the surrounding area and pens and signature of the owner/manager. There is no fee for operating an approved holding facility. If granted, the authorization is valid for two years from the issue date, and is void after those two years if it is not re-authorized. Re-authorization of an approved holding facility must be completed 30 to 60 days prior to the expiration date of the previous approval's end date.



**Figure 4.** Swine ear tags similar to those that may be present on feral hogs. (Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

For a complete list of feral hog approved holding facilities in Texas visit: [http://tahc.state.tx.us/animal\\_health/feral\\_swine.html](http://tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/feral_swine.html).

#### **Penalty for Noncompliance**

According to Chapter 161.1375 of the Texas Administrative Code a person commits an offense when they move a feral hog, or own an approved holding facility and allow a feral hog to be removed without complying with the regulations for moving feral swine. In either case the first offense is punishable by a Class C misdemeanor for each feral hog moved in noncompliance, while a repeat offense is punishable with a Class B misdemeanor.

#### **Summary**

Some landowners choose to sale captured feral hogs to Authorized Holding Facilities to offset damage

costs. These facilities fall under the authorization of the Texas Animal Health Commission. Facility construction and approval are regulated by TAHC. Authorized Holding Facilities must adhere to reporting standards documenting the number and sex of feral pigs purchased or sold. It is important to note that both sexes of feral hogs may be transported to an approved holding facility, while only males may be moved to an authorized hunting preserve. Removing feral hogs from the landscape is important to protect water quality, livestock and wildlife.

For a complete list of feral hog approved holding facilities in Texas visit: [http://tahc.state.tx.us/animal\\_health/feral\\_swine.html](http://tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/feral_swine.html).

**See other feral hog resources at <http://agrilife bookstore.org>.**

- L-5523 Recognizing Feral Hog Sign
- L-5524 Corral Traps for Capturing Feral Hogs
- L-5525 Box Traps for Capturing Feral Hogs
- L-5526 Placing and Baiting Feral Hog Traps
- L-5527 Door Modifications for Feral Hog Traps
- L-5528 Snaring Feral Hog
- L-5529 Making a Feral Hog Snare
- ESP-419 Feral Hogs Impact Ground-nesting Birds
- ESP-420 Feral Hog Laws and Regulations
- ESP-421 Feral Hogs and Disease Concerns
- ESP-422 Feral Hogs and Water Quality in Plum Creek
- ESP-423 Feral Hog Transportation Regulations
- L-5533 Using Fences to Exclude Feral Hogs from Wildlife Feeding Stations
- SP-467 Feral Hogs Negatively Affect Native Plant Communities
- B-6256 Lone Star Healthy Streams: Feral Hog Manual

### **Acknowledgements and disclaimer**

We would like to thank Gene Snelson, Texas Animal Health Commission, and Ken Cearley, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, for their insightful review of this publication.

This publication was developed in part by the Plum Creek Watershed Feral Hog Project, with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Integrated Water Quality Program. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the USDA.

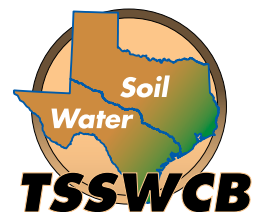




Photo courtesy Jared Timmons, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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