

Crop, Livestock, and Agricultural Property Damages Climb to \$500 Million

- With at least 3.5 million feral hogs, Texas has the largest feral hog population in the United States.
- Feral hog numbers and range continue to increase because of high reproductive rates and lack of natural predators.
- Feral hogs cause significant damage to crops, livestock, pastures, fields, fences, roads, ponds, streams and rivers, as well as wildlife populations and their habitat. Research indicates agricultural losses alone exceed \$500 million.
- Feral hogs pose a considerable public health risk as a disease reservoir to wildlife, livestock, and humans.
- Texas landowners spend an estimated \$7 million or more annually on feral hog control and damage mitigation.

AgriLife Extension's Response

Using funding from the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, Renewable Resources Extension Act, and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Wildlife Services implemented two strategies for



conducting educational outreach in targeted areas: (1) direct control and (2) indirect control through education and technical assistance.

- Direct control involves assisting agricultural producers and landowners with the abatement and removal of feral hogs, using individual and multiple integrated control strategies.
- Indirect control consists of providing producers and landowners with the tools necessary to facilitate feral hog abatement themselves through legal control methods conveyed via educational outreach and technical assistance.
- More than 3,400 producers and landowners attended one or more of the 59 educational events in 2021 that focused on feral hog behavior, control options and procedures, or contacted AgriLife Extension directly to learn more about feral hog abatement.
- Information was disseminated through mass media, social media, the Texas A&M Natural Resources Wild Pigs website (wildpigs.nri.tamu.edu) and the Coping with Feral Hogs website (feralhogs.tamu.edu), reaching a total of 133,000 contacts in 2021, and generating 100,000 page views through the Wild Pigs Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Economic Impacts

- Economic benefits were measured in terms of the reduction in crop, livestock, and agricultural property damages caused by feral hogs.
- In 2021, the project directly assisted landowners in removing 48,000 feral hogs from more than 7.4 million acres, creating an economic benefit of \$14.4 million. The removal of feral hogs through indirect control resulted in an additional \$1.6 million in benefits, for a total economic benefit of \$15.9 million.