

Crop, Livestock, and Agricultural Property Damages Climb to \$100 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 losses to field crops alone exceed \$205 million annually, while total agricultural damages likely exceed \$230 million annually.
- 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, and the Renewable Resources Extension Act, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Extension 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 10,200 producers and landowners attended one or more of the 233 educational events from 2017 to 2019 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 and the Texas A&M Natural Resources Wild Pigs (wildpigs.nri.tamu.edu) and Coping with Feral Hogs websites (feralhogs.tamu.edu), reaching a total of 1.9 million contacts from 2017 to 2019.

Economic Impacts

- Economic benefit was measured in terms of the reduction in crop, livestock, and agricultural property damages caused by feral hogs.
- From 2017 to 2019, the project directly assisted landowners in removing 87,000 feral hogs from more than 18.2 million acres, creating an economic benefit of \$26.1 million. The removal of feral hogs through indirect control resulted in an additional \$14.4 million in benefits, for a total economic benefit of \$40.5 million since 2017.