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In response to last week's press release from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) on feral hogs I have received numerous calls on this subject. Although it is thru that Texas AgriLife Extension did receive \$1 Million over a two year period on feral hog abatement there are a few things that I would like to clear up.

While \$1 million sounds like a lot of money, feral hogs are in well over 200 of the 254 counties in Texas. Estimates are that over 2 million feral hogs now live in Texas and the number is growing. So, \$1 million over two years will not solve the problem. Texas AgriLife Extension Wildlife Services Program must work strategically to address targeted areas for abatement efforts. They will not be able to respond to every request for assistance. As plans become more solidified relative to selected emphasis areas, more help may come in the future.

This is a pilot project to determine the economic effectiveness of feral hog management and not a feral hog eradication program. Cooperating producers/landowners will be selected by the respective local Extension personnel. There will not be a signup list to receive assistance in removing feral hogs from any and all properties within the study area.

Education is a primary function of this project. All landowners across the state will benefit from this project through the educational efforts keeping everyone informed of the project's progress and successful feral hog management procedures. Much of that information will be available on the following website <http://feralhogs.tamu.edu/>.

What does all of this mean for Rains County? Well, to be honest, not much right now. Right not the Feral Hog Abatement Project is focusing research in highly productive crop area and suburban areas. This research will be to develop better trapping and baiting techniques in order to trap large groups of swine.

Meanwhile, here in Rains County, we must utilize some of these new techniques and ideas and try to make them work for us. We must stay after the feral hogs and try to trap as many of them as possible.

Larger traps represent a better opportunity to catch the most hogs at one time as compared to the smaller box traps that can only hold a few hogs or may be avoided altogether by some "trap-wise"

hogs. Do not re-release hogs that are trapped as this just causes problems for other landowners. In fact, it is illegal to capture and re-release hogs without having them screened by a veterinarian for brucellosis and pseudorabies. Contact your local Texas Animal Health Commission for more info on that regulation.

Using sheep and goat panels (4" x 4" squares 5' high) or similar materials, setup the trap in the area where damage is occurring. The trap should be supported at regular intervals (every 4 feet) by t-posts or other similar material and should not have gaps along the bottom where hogs might escape. This design is still portable as the entire trap can be dis-assembled and moved to another area on a flatbed trailer if no hog activity is detected. Set the trap in a "tear drop" shape where the gate is located in the narrow or funnel area (See pictures). This will help funnel the hogs towards a trailer backed up to the gate for loading. Avoid having "hard" corners in the trap design as hogs will tend to pile into that corner and may go over the top. The area inside the trap does not have to be all short grass. It's okay to have some brush or grass inside the trap and may help camouflage the trap itself and make the hogs less wary. It is important that the hogs have enough room to move away from you as you approach the trap to prevent them from panicking.

There are several trap designs and gate designs that are out there. If you would like some more information just give me a call and I will send it to you.

Also I get several calls from folks who want to get rid of the hogs but they themselves do not want to trap them. Guess what, there are other folks out there who are willing to trap them for you. Most of the time at zero charge to you. I have that contact information available also.

Just give me a call.

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