The History of a Central Texas Feral Hog Management Program

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THE HISTORY OF A CENTRAL TEXAS FERAL HOG MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT: Wildlife Services personnel have attempted to alleviate damage caused by feral hogs to grain crops surrounding a wildlife management area for the past 12 years. The hogs are damaging primarily corn and milo crops which border a 12,000 acre wildlife management area owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Numerous methods have been attempted to lower the hog population and reduce the amount of damage suffered by the area farmers. Methods employed by Wildlife Services have included live trapping, shooting, snaring, dogs, aerial hunting, spotlighting, and the use of infrared and night vision equipment. The success and results of these methods have been varied and are influenced by a number of limiting factors including cover, public use, and somewhat limited access to certain properties.

KEY WORDS: feral pig, history, Texas,

LOCATION
Granger Lake, Williamson County, Texas.
Some open pasture areas are present at the project site. Dense cover exists over much of the area. Much of the cropland is directly adjacent to the management area which allows the hogs to move freely without ever leaving cover.

Much of the management area contains heavily timbered regions. There are a few openings in the dense cover, but they offer limited visibility. There is often no access to the interior acreages of crops.
DAMAGE TO CROPS

Hog damage to corn crops

Hog damage to milo crops  Photo: Eddie Davis
DAMAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Management Strategies

The Corps of Engineers implemented strategies such as increased grazing and net-wire fencing.

Private land owners often attempt to trap feral hogs year round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electric Fencing</th>
<th>Net-Wire Fencing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourages feral hogs from entering crops. Can be effective if there are other nearby crops that are not fenced.</td>
<td>Greatly reduces places where hogs can enter properties.</td>
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Pasture Grazing

900 acres in 1995
6,000 acres in 2008

Increased grazing greatly reduced heavy cover
The increased visibility resulted in the removal of greater feral hog numbers

Strategies Used by Wildlife Services

Snaring

Snares were often placed in locations where feral hogs were entering crops under net-wire fences

There were also placed in cross fences where hog trails were intersecting them
Cage Trapping

Cage trapping was used on a limited basis. Most of the work was done in the summer months when food supplies were abundant and cage trapping is least effective.

Shooting

Some shooting was conducted at watering areas and bait holes.

Photo: Dan McMurtry
Turn rows between crops provide shooting lanes to remove feral hogs

Shooting--Night Vision

Night vision equipment can be very effective in removing feral, especially in post-harvest grain fields

Dogs

Dogs are very effective at removing hogs from crops and areas of heavy cover

Even if not caught by the dogs, hogs will often leave an area where they have been harassed by the dogs
### Aerial Hunting

Aerial hunting can remove large numbers of hogs in a short time period

Usually only effective in the winter months when there is no foliage present to limit visibility

Photo: unknown WS personnel in Texas

### PROBLEM OF EDUCATED HOGS

Many hogs become educated over the years and will avoid certain methods such as snaring and trapping
RESULTS

The results varied greatly from year to year. This is due to various factors such as weather events and employee availability.