ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL 2021-22

September 14, 2021 Exhibit 13

FERAL SWINE FACT SHEET

WHAT ARE FERAL SWINE?

Feral swine are an invasive, non-native species. Over time, pigs have escaped or were released intentionally, creating free-ranging feral swine populations in the United States and Canada. Prolific breeders, they can produce four to eight piglets per litter and multiple litters per year. Feral swine are highly adaptable but prefer habitats with an abundant supply of water and dense cover. They are aggressive and pose serious ecological, economic, and health threats.

Species like the Russian or European boar were brought to the United States as domestic pigs from Europe and Asia and are considered the traditional species of feral swine. Both species, as well as hybrids, are prohibited under Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM).

Domestic swine species can also revert to a feral state in just a few generations. Because of this, Montana's laws defining feral swine do not include a genotypic definition. Instead, feral swine in Montana include any hog, boar, or pig that appears to be untamed, undomesticated, or in a wild state or appears to be contained for commercial hunting or trapping.

Berryman Institute, Utah State University

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FERAL SWINE IN MONTANA?

The 2015 Legislature gave authority over the control and eradication of feral swine to the Department of Livestock (DOL). Since that time, DOL has worked closely with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), the United States Department of Agricultures' Wildlife Services (USDA-WS), and the Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC) on preventing feral swine introduction into Montana.

WHY ARE FERAL SWINE PROHIBITED IN MONTANA?

Feral swine are an invasive species that damages crops, pastures, and waterways, and these animals can carry diseases that spread to livestock, people, and wildlife. Because of their destructive nature, DOL worked with FWP, USDA-WS, and industry to pass laws prohibiting feral swine presence in Montana. The laws were written recognizing the hunting constituency that rapidly builds after feral swine are established and the difficulty in eradicating populations once established. The law also includes penalties for violations. These include fines up to $10,000 per violation and repayment of costs incurred in the eradication of feral swine.

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WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS PERTAINING TO FERAL SWINE?

The following actions are prohibited in the state of Montana:

- Importing, transporting, or possessing live feral swine.
- Intentionally, knowingly, or negligently allowing swine to live in a feral state.
- Hunting, trapping, or killing feral swine.
- Assisting in hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine.
- Intentionally feeding feral swine.
- Expanding the range of feral swine.
- Profiting from the release, hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine.

WHY IS HUNTING FERAL SWINE FOR SPORT PROHIBITED?

The 2015 Legislature passed a bill banning hunting of feral swine based on the following facts:

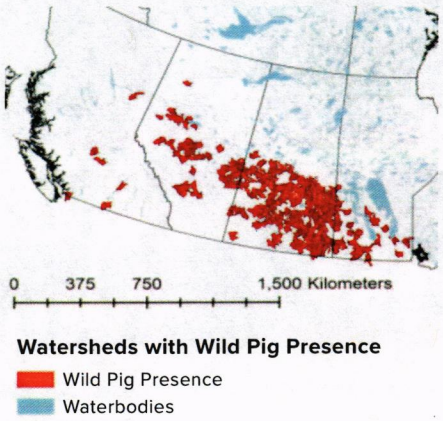
- A group of feral swine is called a sounder. If a sounder is detected and not all of the sounder is killed, animals that escape can disperse further on the landscape and learn behaviors to help them evade further attempts at hunting.
- Feral swine are prolific breeders. Failed attempts to kill an entire sounder can lead to exponential growth of feral swine numbers. Such growth has been documented in states and provinces that allow recreational hunting.
- Experts in other states and Canadian provinces attribute the severity of their feral swine issues to recreational hunting. Once a hunting constituency becomes established, eradication becomes nearly impossible.

ARE FERAL SWINE HERE YET?

No. DOL has been working in partnership with FWP and the USDA-WS to respond to reports of feral swine in Montana. Since the prohibition was passed by the 2015 Montana Legislature, DOL has received reports from the public of possible sightings of feral swine in Montana. These reports include feral swine imported from Texas for hunting purposes, sightings by hunters along river bottoms, and reports from landowners along Montana's Hi-Line. A report of a feral swine population in north central Montana in January 2018 resulted in 13.5 flight hours looking for evidence of feral swine in the area. Fortunately, nothing was found.

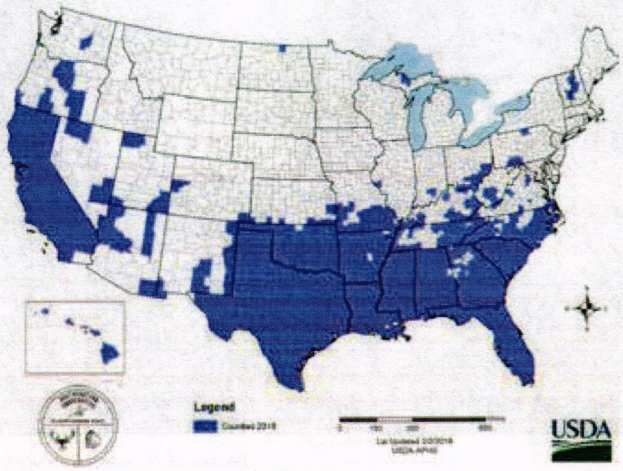
SQUEAL ON PIGS!

Canadian Distribution 2011-2017



University of Saskatchewan

Feral Swine Populations 2018 by County



WHERE WILL FERAL SWINE COME FROM?

Feral swine were first brought into the United States in the 1500s by early explorers and settlers as a source of food. Due to their highly adaptable nature and reproductive efficiency, the geographic range of this destructive species is rapidly expanding, and its populations are increasing across North America. Feral swine are capable of crossing land borders through natural behavioral movements. Their range has also been expanded through the illegal translocation of swine by humans and escapes from enclosures.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Feral swine are aggressive animals that can be extremely destructive to fields, fences, and facilities.

- Feral swine destroy habitats and young wildlife. Their wallows can affect ponds and wetlands, muddying the water and destroying aquatic vegetation. They can strip a field of crops in one night and pose a threat to ground nesting birds and some endangered species. Feral swine also aid in the spread of invasive plant species.
- Feral swine compete with native wildlife for important food supplies and prey on the nests, eggs, and young of native ground nesting birds and reptiles. Feral swine have also been documented eating deer fawns and actively hunting small mammals and reptiles.
- Feral swine spread diseases to people, pets, and livestock. Feral swine also can transmit diseases and parasites, such as pseudorabies, brucellosis, and tuberculosis, to livestock and people. In domestic animals, these diseases can cause abortion, infertility, decreased production, and high mortality in newborn animals.
- Feral swine impact the economy. Feral swine have been found in at least 39 states and cause up to $2.5 billion in damages in the United States annually. This includes control costs, agricultural production losses, and non-production losses like damage to infrastructure.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE A FERAL SWINE?

Report sightings to the Squeal on Pigs hotline at 406-444-2976. The eradication of feral swine in Montana is restricted to the following groups:

- Employees of DOL
- Other state or federal employees designated by the DOL

A private landowner or lessee who encounters feral swine on their land or land under their control may attempt to eradicate the feral swine if the animals pose an immediate danger to persons or property, or the animals will expand their range without immediate eradication. In this instance, the individual is still responsible for notifying DOL within 24 hours.

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Bill Hamrick, Mississippi State University

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WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FERAL SWINE?

- Feral swine exhibit wide variation in color and size.
- Their hair is coarse with long bristles, and the color ranges from black, gray, brown, blonde, and red to spotted combinations. Generally, they are black.
- The tail is moderately long, with sparse hair.
- The average female weighs between 77 and 330 pounds. The average wild boar weighs between 130 and 440 pounds.
- The elongated snout is flattened on the end and is tough and flexible. The males have four tusks that grow continually and can be extremely sharp. The upper tusks are as much as 3 to 5 inches long, and usually are worn or broken from use.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF FERAL SWINE HAVE BEEN ON MY PROPERTY?

Sometimes landowners are unaware that they have had wild pigs on their property until they see an animal or until the damage is widespread. There are several specific signs that indicate the presence of feral swine:

- Extensive rooting or digging, as feral swine search for various foods like acorns, roots, and earthworms. Rooted acres can stretch many miles when sounders are involved.
- Wallows, especially in moist areas during summer months.
- Tree rubbing following wallowing behavior.
- Trails through dense vegetation and tunnels in the brush.
- Tracks in the mud near streams, ponds and spring. Feral swine tracks can be distinguished from deer tracks due to their round or circular shape, about as wide as they are long.
- Scat or droppings of feral swine can vary depending on the material eaten. Scat may contain partially digested remnants of acorns, grains, and animal material.

WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- SQUEALonPIGSMT.com
- fieldguide.mt.gov
- invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/vertebrates/wild-boar
- aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/operational-activities/feral-swine/feral-swine-resources

MISC
Montana Invasive Species Council

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK

USDA