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**FERAL SWINE WORKING GROUP  
MEETING MINUTES**

Chair: Gray Anderson (Virginia)  
Vice-Chair: Jim LaCour (Louisiana)

Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>  
Time: 10:15 AM -12:15 PM (CST)

86<sup>th</sup> North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference (virtual)

**MINUTES**

Call to Order/Review Agenda (G. Anderson/J. LaCour)

- Chairman Anderson opened the meeting

Introductions

- Attendees were asked to enter their name/affiliation/email address in the chat in lieu of verbal introductions, for sake of time.

Discussion and development of a Work Plan and potential funding (G. Anderson)

**List Activities and Objectives that will be Accomplished in the Coming Year:**

- Encourage uniform policies that prohibit the interstate movement of feral swine and translocation of feral swine.
  - *Began work with NWPTF and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation to provide accurate and consistent information to decision makers.*
- Promote and encourage research for economical, efficacious control methods and related public perceptions including the cultural and social dynamics of feral swine hunting.
- Develop management plans for feral swine population eradication or reduction based on sound scientific and ground-proven methods.
  - *The National Wild Pig Task Force Applied Management Subcommittee generated a white paper on toxicant use in wild pig control effort within North America.*
- Discuss the role of federal entities in the control of feral swine in North America.
  - *Members of the FSWG serve on the USDA WS National Wildlife Pig Damage Steering Committee to assist in allocation of federal resources to control wild pigs at the state level.*
- Encourage partnerships between states and between state and federal entities to unify the battle against the spread of feral swine.



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- *The FSWG leadership serve on or engage with SEAFWA and MAFWA feral swine committees to encourage proven control methods and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions. In addition, we reached out to NEAFWA and WAFWA to find a representative for these association to provide input. WAFWA has selected Justin Foster (TPWD) to work with this committee.*
- Inform the AFWA Directors of the actions of the FSWG and act on any directives given to the FSWG by the Directors.
  - *As a new group the FSWG has not yet interacted with the Director's or been provided any directives.*

TWS Wildlife Damage Management Virtual Working Group Meeting (B. White)

- This conference will be held during **April 19-22**. Registration is only \$50 for professionals and \$30 for students.
- To register and for more information: <https://conference.usu.edu/wildlife-damage-management/>

USDA-APHIS-WS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program update (D. Nolte)

- This program began in 2014. The key components that are vital to the successful implementation of the APHIS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program are:
  - Field Operations
  - Disease and Population Monitoring
  - Research
  - Planning and Evaluation
  - Communication and Outreach
  - Regulatory Actions
- See Appendix for full report

Report from the National Wild Pig Task Force (G. Anderson)

- The next International Wild Pig Conference will be held during April 24-27, 2022 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Report from the SEAFWA Wild Hog Working Group (M. Chopp)

- This report was provided given by Gray Anderson
- Kevin Lowrey (GA DNR) is the new chair of this working group and the co-chair is Terri Brunjes (KY DFW)
- Virtual meeting was held August 2020 due to cancellation of IWPC. Almost 100% attendance on virtual meeting.
- Wild hog toxicant feeder testing program underway with WMI-the toxicant delivery systems will be tested on sites in Georgia and Florida.
- Wild hog trapping BMPs – should it be pursued? WHWG chose not to pursue because



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southeastern states already have them.

- APHIS aerial gunning available to state wildlife agencies with new safety measures.
- Sodium nitrite field trials were successful in TX with lower dose. Complete mortality on hogs. Spring 2021 trials will commence. Could be registered as early as 2023.
- 2021 – WHWG will request letter of support for toxicants.

Report from the MAFWA Ad hoc Feral Swine Committee (S. Backs)

- Terri Brunjes is the new chair of this working group
- See Appendix for full report

Next steps and Wrap-up Discussion (G. Anderson/J. LaCour)

- *Relative to the prevention of transport of feral swine; there was some discussion about developing model regulations that could be shared with agencies to encourage them to be proactive in addressing feral swine transport, before problems emerge.*
- *Potential for this group to develop a state agency model strategy for feral swine management to encourage proactive management by agencies that as of yet do not have swine, before problems emerge.*
- *The working group now has a page on the AFWA website at: <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/feral-swine>*



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## Appendix

USDA-APHIS-WS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program Update

Report from the MAFWA Ad hoc Feral Swine Committee

### **USDA's National Feral Swine Program:**

First funded in FY14, with funding increases most years since its inception including receiving funds through the 2018 Farm Bill.

APHIS serves as the lead federal agency in a cooperative effort with other federal, state, tribal, and local entities that share a common interest in reducing or eliminating problems caused by feral swine.

Since environmental conditions and laws governing wild pigs vary considerably among states, APHIS' strategy is to provide resources and expertise at a national level, while allowing flexibility to manage operational activities from a local or state perspective.

The overall objective of the program is to minimize damage inflicted by feral swine, and the program's design supports a two-pronged approach:

- **Elimination:** In states where feral swine are emerging or populations are low, APHIS cooperates with local and state agencies to implement strategies to eliminate the animals.
- **Control:** In states where feral swine populations are high, the focus is to reduce damages the animals inflict.

Six Components to the Program:

#### **Operational:** (Largest component)

WS State Director works with a local task force of engaged stakeholders that helps align the state's feral swine agenda with national goals and best practices.

The National Program has supported activities in 42 states and 3 territories.

#### Farm Bill

The 2018 Farm Bill provided a total of \$75 million, divided evenly between APHIS and NRCS, over 5 years to establish the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (FSCP), addressing feral swine threats to agriculture, native ecosystems, and human and animal health. During the first round of combined pilot projects, APHIS and NRCS allocated and awarded funds supporting 20 projects in 10 high density feral swine states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas). Following a second round of solicitation for proposals, APHIS and NRCS approved an additional 14 projects, 10 new projects from states presently conducting pilot Farm Bill projects, with 4 new projects to begin in 2 additional states (Hawaii and Missouri).

APHIS has dispersed approximately \$35.6 million for operational activities, either directly to state program, aerial support, or large equipment/supply purchases (e.g., ammunition, vehicles). Remainder of APHIS funds have been used to support research activities to develop a NRCS has distributed of their \$37.5 million to partners to support these cooperative projects.

## Research:

### Development of a safe and effective feral swine toxicant

KaPut: Dr. Jim Beasley et al. recently published his work on Kaput, showed efficacy to cause death if consumed, but field trials did not indicate efficacy for operational use – Currently APHIS will have trouble supporting its inclusion into operational activities

Sodium Nitrite: Field trials are scheduled for this summer in Texas and Alabama, remaining Food Safety Trials are being contracted out, depending on results should be able to submit package for registration in about a year, hopefully less.

### Feral Swine Genetic Archive

Archive is established and developing approaches to detect where animals originated or at least that they have been moved into an area.

### Document Damage

Auburn conducting trials on impacts to native wildlife and water quality. Results should be released soon.

NWRC determining economic impacts of feral swine and conduct cost/benefit analysis of operational activities. Collaborating with several universities to document damages reduced relative to Farm Bill Projects.

## Disease Monitoring (Highlights)

### National Disease Surveillance

- National surveillance efforts focus on evaluating feral swine for the presence of antibodies to classical swine fever (CSF), pseudorabies (PRV), and swine brucellosis (SB). Between 2017 and 2020, nation-wide seroprevalence bounced between ~17.5 and 24% for PRV and ~5.5 and 10% for SB, and zero for CSF.



| Year | Disease | Total samples tested | Total samples positive | Percent positive |
|------|---------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 2020 | CSF     | 4,013                | 0                      | 0                |
|      | PRV     | 4,003                | 978                    | 24.4             |
|      | SB      | 3,994                | 408                    | 10.2             |
| 2019 | CSF     | 3,537                | 0                      | 0                |
|      | PRV     | 3,503                | 798                    | 22.8             |
|      | SB      | 3,476                | 199                    | 5.7              |
| 2018 | CSF     | 2,868                | 0                      | 0                |
|      | PRV     | 3,002                | 558                    | 18.6             |
|      | SB      | 3,000                | 186                    | 6.2              |
| 2017 | CSF     | 2,997                | 0                      | 0                |
|      | PRV     | 2,979                | 530                    | 17.8             |
|      | SB      | 2,955                | 207                    | 7.0              |

- A new surveillance approach was rolled in FY21 out which is predicated as an early detection system for foreign animal diseases, including CSF, ASF, and FMD. Also, sample size increased by 2x – we're now sampling target is now approximately 6,000 animals. More than 2,100 animals have been sampled thus far in FY21.

### Chronic Wasting Disease

- Adult feral swine (n=102) were collected from Newton county, AR and (n=27) were collected from Dewey and Caddo counties, OK
- Brain, LNs (medial retropharyngeal, parotid, and submandibular), whole blood, GI tract, tonsil, feces, and masseter muscle were collected
- Samples (SMLN, RPLN, and obex from each animal) were screened using RT-QuIC, PMCA, and IHC – samples that were non-negative by a number of screening assays were inoculated into a transgenic mouse model (both porcized and cervidized mice are being used)
- Results are still pending; however, some mice infected with non-negative samples from feral swine have developed atypical neurological signs and died, although there is currently no evidence of prion disease using either PMCA or Western Blot assays
- All have been female, porcized transgenics that have died between 81 and 102 days post-inoculation

### Anthrax

- Texas has an anthrax endemic region; however, in the last couple years anthrax cases have shown up outside of that zone – feral swine have also showed up in those regions in the last several years.
- Partnering with Colorado State University to experimentally infect feral swine piglets with *Bacillus anthracis* to begin to understand the bacteriologic and immunological kinetics of anthrax in swine

### Zoonotic Diseases

WS partnered with the Food Safety and Inspection Service to sample feral swine in an abattoir setting that were destined for the human food chain. These samples (n=375) demonstrated that these animals had been exposed to a number of important zoonotic pathogens including *Leptospira* spp (49%), *Toxoplasma gondii* (9%), *Trichinella* spp (4%), influenza A virus (14%), and hepatitis E virus (16%). These samples are currently being screened for evidence of exposure to *Mycobacterium bovis*.

### **Communication and Outreach**

Federal Agency Feral Swine Newsletter published quarterly

New video series—Feral Swine in America—which chronicles the impacts of feral swine damage on American livelihoods and ecosystems through personal stories. Listen to farmers, ranchers, land managers, conservationists, and others as they describe their experiences dealing with feral swine damage to agriculture and natural resources.

**Planning and Evaluation**

PPD Program Assessment and Accountability Review of the National Feral Swine Program.

Anticipate report to be issued soon. Expectations are for a supportive report. However, there will be recommendations for possible changes or considerations. One consideration is whether NFSP should continue to support monitoring re-emergence of feral swine once they are removed from a state. AFWA input on how this issue should be handled would be greatly appreciated.

**Regulations**

Support states to develop regulations appropriate for their respective state.



# MAFWA Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee – 2021 Annual Report

*Compiled and Submitted by Terri Brunjes, Chr., MAFWA Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee 3/5/2021*



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The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) established the Midwest Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee (MFSC) in 2013. The purpose of the feral swine committee is to further MAFWA's function of promoting the conservation and management of wildlife resources in the face of rapidly expanding feral swine populations which directly endanger those wildlife resources. The Committee is to collect and compare feral swine information among the member States and Provinces, and to provide management and policy recommendations to the Directors of MAFWA.

**MISSION:** Develop results-driven and science-based management actions to prevent the introduction and spread of feral swine and promote the eradication of existing populations of these animals in the Midwest.

**CHARGES:**

- 1) Develop management plans for feral swine based on sound scientific and proven methods.
- 2) Promote and encourage research on economically feasible and effective methods of feral swine control.
- 3) Encourage uniform polices on the translocation and interstate movement of feral swine.
- 4) Discuss the role of federal entities in the control of feral swine in the Midwest.
- 5) Encourage partnerships among states and between state and federal entities to unify the battle against the spread of feral swine.
- 6) Advise the MAFWA Directors on issues relating to feral swine policy, inform the Directors of committee actions and execute any directives given by them.

**MAFWA Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee 2021 Annual Meeting/Progress Report**

**Summary:** The MAFWA Feral Swine Committee annual report is summarily reduced to the respective State and Provincial reports summarily submitted with the primary function of the MAFWA Feral Swine Committee being information and exchange network among states and provinces. The committee recently updated and compiled information on the legal hunting status of wild pigs in the Midwest states. The recent involvement of the Canadian provinces in the MAFWA Feral Swine Committee was stimulated in part by concerns over the possible arrival of African Swine Fever (AFS) from Asian countries and their desire to know about wild pig control techniques used in the states. Canada's Federal department of Environment and Climate Change has recently provided project funding to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) to coordinate efforts across Canadian jurisdictions in addressing the invasive wild pig issue. The CWHC has since established two working groups; one strategic group to lead policy development and strategic planning for national priorities and goals, and one operational group to facilitate information sharing of technical information and expertise. The number of feral swine/wild pigs removed continues to increase in the more heavily wild pig populated states in the Midwest, with significant reductions in wild pig numbers and distributions in some Midwest states with lower pig numbers. Most of the work in the Midwest states is to be conducted by USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services through cooperative agreements with states as part of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program (NFSMDMP).

The term "elimination" in terms of eliminating feral swine is loosely defined as experienced by Illinois in 2019 when some feral swine reappeared on their landscape in two different locations and the source of those pigs was not reported. The reappearance of feral swine in Illinois also illustrates the value of DNA profiling to determine source or origin. Kentucky and Kansas appear to be gaining some ground in feral swine in some parts of the state but as Kentucky reported this year, they still have some sizable populations to address. Kentucky has launched a well-organized social media and outreach effort modeled after Missouri's outreach programs. Missouri continues to remove a large number of wild pigs (>10,000) at a sizable cost to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Michigan has experienced a sizable reduction in feral swine but continues to keep their outreach efforts going in hopes of warding

off future illegal releases of feral swine. Ohio is working toward narrowing their elimination priorities and again demonstrated that that wild pig shooting preserves can be a troublesome source. As in previous years, the resistance and lack of cooperation by some landowners continues to be an obstacle to eliminating wild pigs, essentially creating 'wild pig refuges' or source populations that eventually disperse back into areas where pig removal was successful. The paradox is that some of these uncooperative, "recreation" type landowners is that they are frequently recipients of State and Federal incentives for conservation practices or easements. Related to the pig refuge issue, is a new work around of existing feral swine regulations in at least one state, is to ear tag captured wild pigs, call them domestic, and then hunt them inside high fence.

A continual, chronic and often increasing problem facing all States and Provinces is the apparent abandonment, poorly confined, illegally released or dumped carcasses of pot-bellied, Heritage, Heirloom pigs or hybrids thereof. Inherent to their existence, are issues related to their legal definition or status within a respective jurisdiction often compromise removal or elimination. Many municipal animal control personnel are reluctant to deal with these pigs and occasionally these pigs develop a social media following of sympathizers. Unfortunately, these types of pigs will persist as free-ranging populations, will cause damage to native flora and fauna, residential lawns, or agricultural row crops and are potential disease sources, something of particular interest with AFS concerns. Fortunately, if removal is possible, their general lack of wariness and relative athleticism due to their likely origin, facilitates removal but those removal efforts taxes limited personnel time and resources that could be addressing more critical feral swine/wild pig problems.