



April 15, 2011

## Breaking News

- **[Day of remembrance: 1 year after Gulf oil disaster - 22 Hours Ago](#)**

## **[Much learned at Feral Hog Field Day](#)**



Hog buyer Phillip Swallows, right, shows the right way to get a hog to cooperate when in the pen. Also pictured is Clay Vander-Hoya of Pinehurst Farms.



AgriLife specialist Dr. Billy Higgenbotham tells the crowd gathered at Wulf Outdoor Sports for Feral Hog Day about the importance of owning a game camera. Rich Flowers/Athens Review

## **<http://www.athensreview.com/local/x325992102/Much-learned-at-Feral-Hog-Field-Day>**

**You can catch them, but first you need to take their picture**

**Rich Flowers**

**[The Athens Review \(http://www.athensreview.com\)](http://www.athensreview.com)**

Athens — If you're a rural landowner, and don't have a feral hog problem, count your blessings.

Dr. Billy Higgenbotham, Professor and wildlife specialist at the AgriLife Extension in Overton told the crowd that turned out for the Feral Hog Field Day on the sprawling Wulf Outdoor Sports property in Athens, that you may be dealing with a bigger porcine proliferation than you predicted. The first step to eradicating them is to mount a game camera, and see exactly what you're dealing with.

"If you're going to be successful in trapping hogs, you need to get one (camera)," Higgenbotham said. "Your time is worth more than the \$75 your going to spend on this."

When you begin to see signs of wild hogs on your property, Higgenbotham said, you should put out bait, get a camera and start trying to get pictures of hogs.

“What would be the importance of getting glamor shots of hogs and wild pigs?” Higgenbotham asked. “You can’t trap what you can’t see.”

Knowing the number of hogs in a “sounder” will determine what type of trap you get.

“We’ve got some sounders of pigs in East Texas that the trap is not big enough for,” Higgenbotham said, pointing at a corral type trap. “If you’ve got two or three hogs, a small trap’s fine.”

Before setting up the trap, you should backtrack as far as you can to see where the hogs are coming from. If they are coming from a place not on your property, find the place where they’re entering, and put the trap there, Higgenbotham said.

“If you don’t know, bait several spots around your property,” Higgenbotham said.

When Higgenbotham started trapping hogs in 1984, they were relatively scarce in the Neches River Bottom, and near the Trinity River.

“We’re covered up now,” Higgenbotham said.

If your trap isn’t big enough, you might catch a few, but there might be several standing around outside that you could have captured.

“Be greedy. Catch as many as you can in as few trips as you possibly can,” Higgenbotham said.

Those who attended the feral hog event walked to three different locations on the grounds. Besides Higgenbotham, attendees heard from Phillip Swallows, who buys wild hogs from trappers. He had tips for getting the hogs to him, and sold with as little difficulty as possible. It helps to be smarter than a hog, he said when trying to load them on a truck.

“Hysteria doesn’t say anything more to these hogs than it does to human beings,” Swallows said. “When you get hysterical, you can’t think. Those hogs, you let ‘em calm down, quit poking them, quit shooting them, quit praying over them.”

Terry Shriver, a Wildlife Damage Specialist from the Overton office spoke about trapping hogs and “varmits” and how to make your own trap.

During warmer months, feral hogs create wallows in moist areas near ponds, creeks, and sloughs to access cool mud, which helps to avoid summer heat, and ward off biting insects. Fecal material deposited in these locations is likely to contribute bacteria and pathogens to stream systems. In hot weather, hogs often lie in wallows during the day.

After wallowing, hogs rub on fixed objects to remove dried mud, hair, and parasites. Trees, fallen logs, fence posts, rocks and utility poles are commonly used for rubbing, particularly if they are located near water or wallows. Hogs have an affinity for utility poles treated with creosote, and many poles within a hog’s home range will have visible markings.

As is the case in many areas across Texas, feral hog numbers appear to be on the rise in the Henderson County area. To prevent negative impacts to agriculture and water quality, an integrated management approach of multiple techniques often yields the best potential for success.

Large corral traps have proven extremely effective for reducing hog numbers quickly, and should be considered in most management efforts.

Feral hogs typically travel in large family groups called sounders, and a large corral-type trap can be effective in capturing the entire group.