



AgriLIFE EXTENSION

Texas A&M System

## Feral Hogs in Texas

**Jim Cathey, Ph.D.**  
**Extension Wildlife**  
**Specialist**

# Wildlife

# Wildlife ?



# Topics to Cover

- **History**
- **Biology**
- **Economics**
- **Population management**



# Feral Hog?



- Names
  - Javelina
  - Collared Peccary

# History of Feral Hogs

- **Feral swine are descendants of domesticated pigs**
  - **wild free-ranging**
- **The first documented in U.S. in Florida**
  - **by the Spanish explorer, Hernando de Soto**
- **Subsequent releases established first founders**
  - **by Hispanic and Anglo colonists**
  - **raising free-ranging hog herds**

# Feral Hog Biology

- **Females are reproductively mature at 8 - 10 months old**
- **Young are born in throughout the year**
  - late winter and early spring
- **The gestation period is 115 days**
- **Life expectancy is 4 - 5 yrs**



# Feral Hog Biology

- **Males**
  - **Weights range 75 – 440 lbs; avg. ~ 180**
  - **Coarse hair or bristles**
  - **Generally solitary**
- **Females**
  - **Average weight ~150**
  - **Coarse hair or bristles**
  - **Generally social occurring in groups called sounders**





# Biology

- **Well adapted to a variety of habitats**
- **Prefer moist bottomland and dense vegetation**
  - **Rivers & creeks**
  - **Ponds & lakes**
  - **Marshes & sloughs**
- **Rest during the day in dense, shady areas**
- **Most active at night or early morning and**

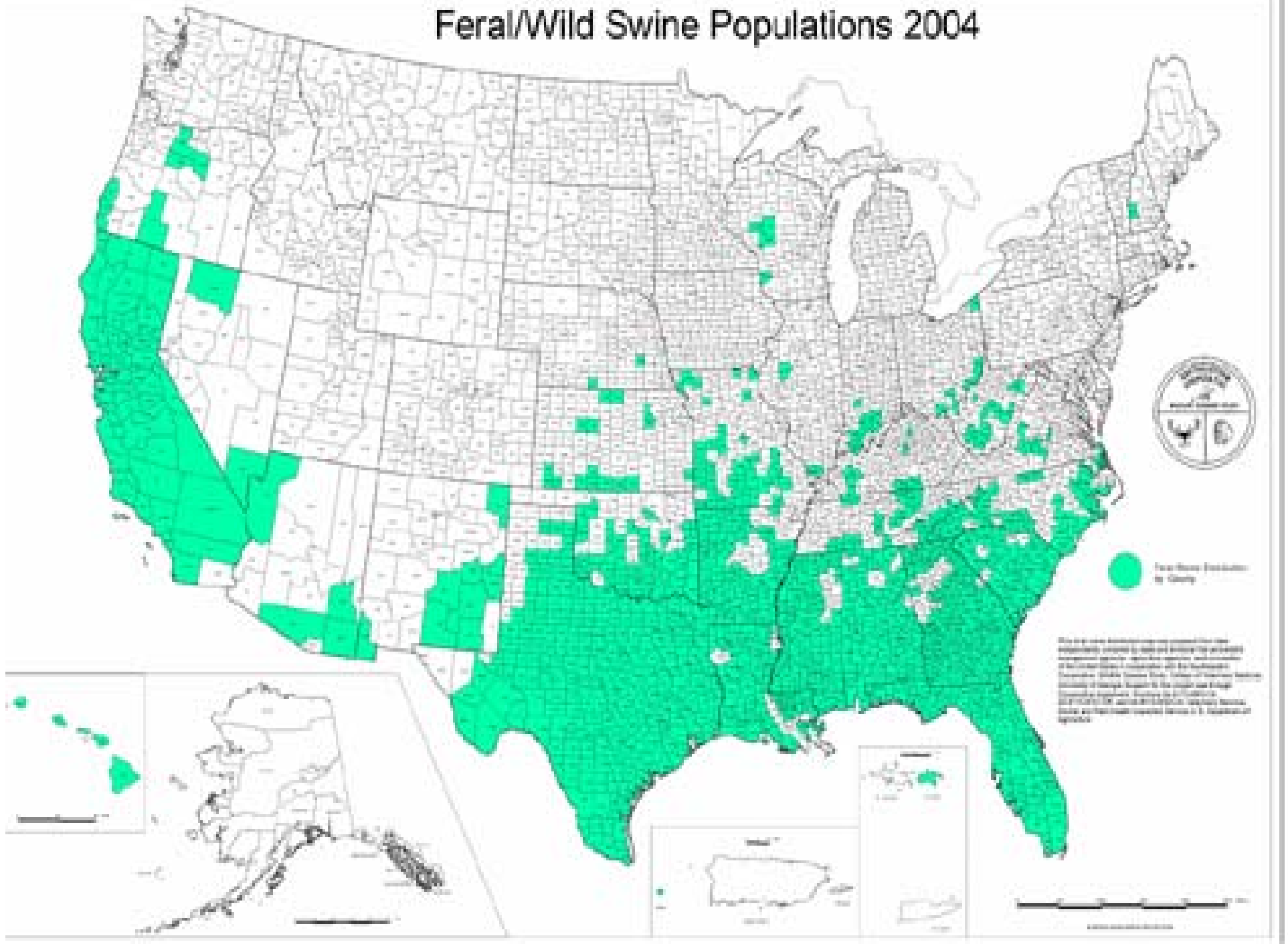


# Too Many Hogs?

- **Texas population estimated at over 1.5 million**



# Feral/Wild Swine Populations 2004



# The Big Question



**Do feral hogs have a place in nature and the hunting industry, or do they negatively impact the ecosystem and agriculture?**

Should you stock feral hogs on your property?

15134 Absolutely NOT!

# Positive Examples

<b>Feral Hogs Hunts</b>	
<b>Package Hunts (2 days)</b>	<b>\$550 - 795</b>
<b>Per Animal</b>	<b>\$150 - 200</b>

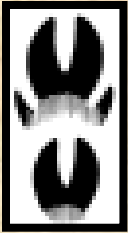
# Negative Examples

## Feral Hogs Damage

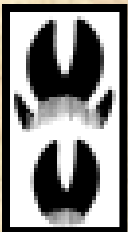
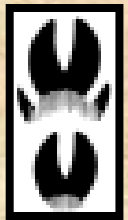
<b>Average estimated cost of damage</b>	<b>\$7,515</b>
<b>Avg. amount spent on controlling hogs</b>	<b>\$2,631</b>

- Survey by Dr. Clark Adams et al.

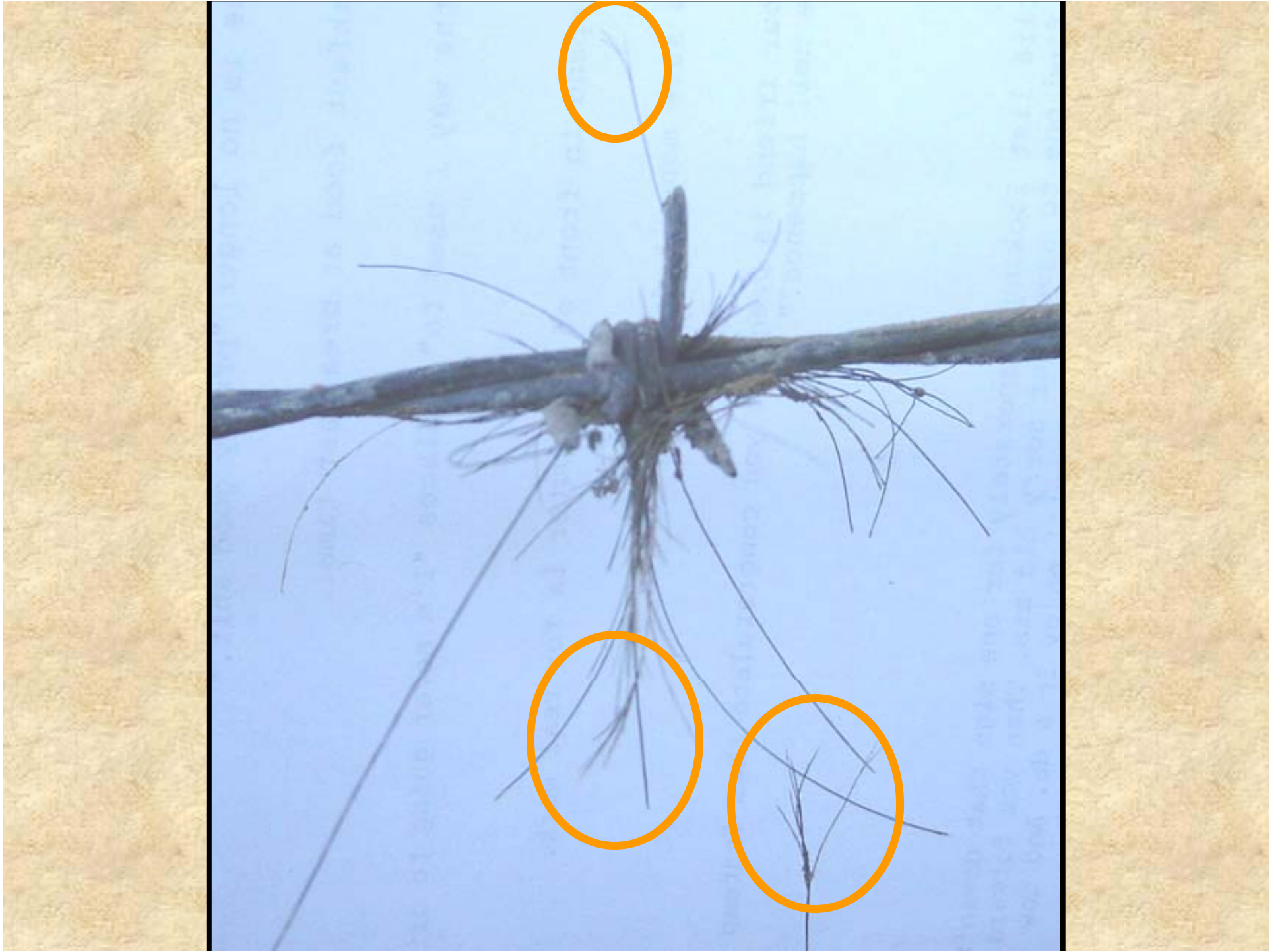
# Hog Sign



- Tracks are wider and shorter than a deer track but similar in type
- Toes of the track are usually rounded and blunt







# Hog Sign



# Hog Sign

- Rubs are found near wallows – used to remove dry mud, hair and insects





# Crop Damage



**“There’s 2 kinds of landowners in Texas:  
Those that have hogs today, and those that will have  
someday!”**







2004 3 24





# Damage



- **Feral hogs aggressively seek feed and knock down feeders**
- **Feral hogs tear up fences by pushing holes in the netting or wires**

# Damage



**Feral hogs compete with livestock and wildlife species for food and other resources**

# Damage



- **Feral hogs are omnivores**
  - **Eating plants and animals**
  
- **They have a keen sense of smell**
  - **efficient predator**

# **Pseudorabies and Brucellosis**

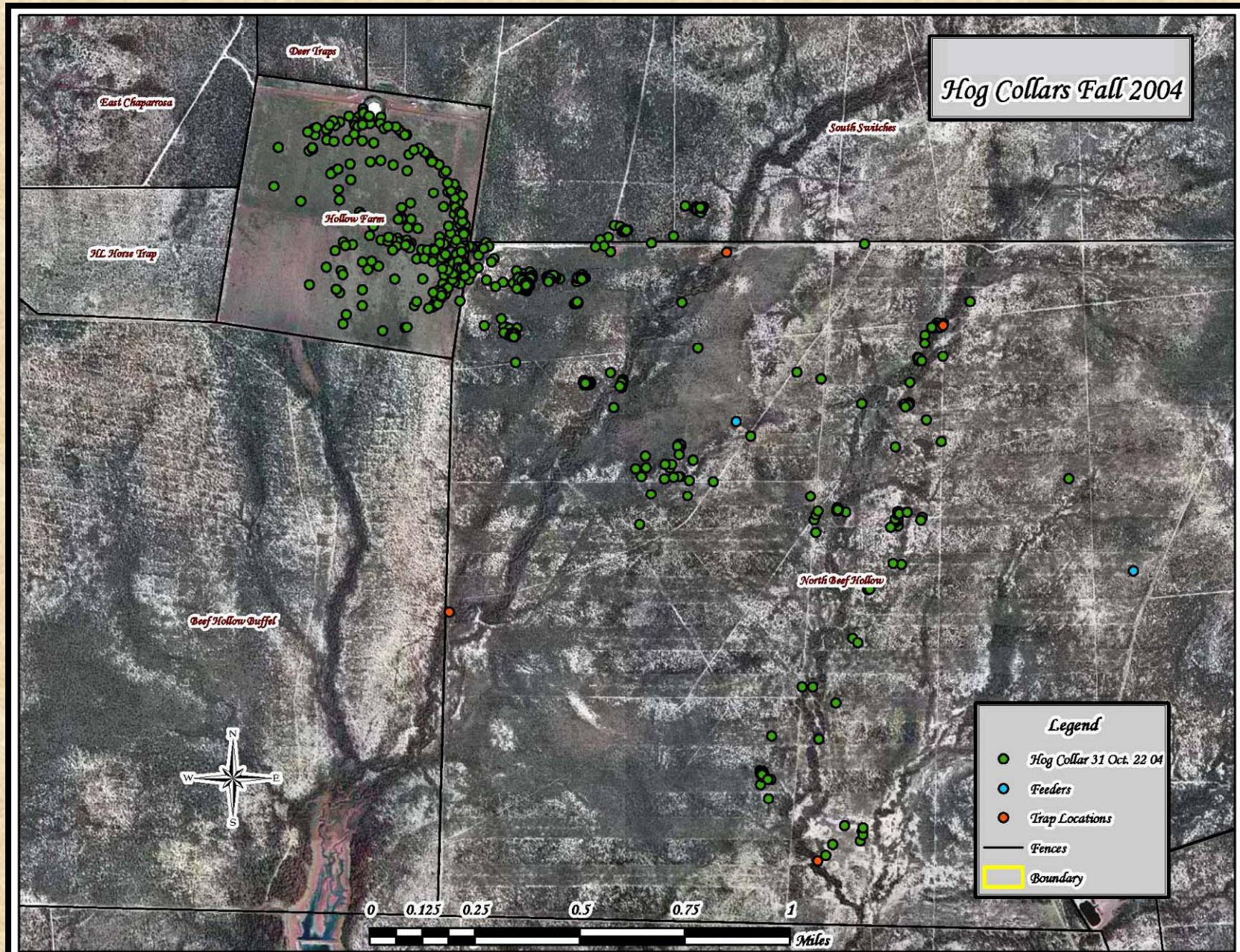
- **Angelina/Anderson Counties-101 hogs tested**
  - **24% brucellosis and 22% pseudorabies exposed**
- **Nueces/Kleberg Counties-60 hogs tested**
  - **12% brucellosis and 38% pseudorabies exposed**

**Source: Wyckoff et al. 2006. CKWRI TAMU-Kingsville**

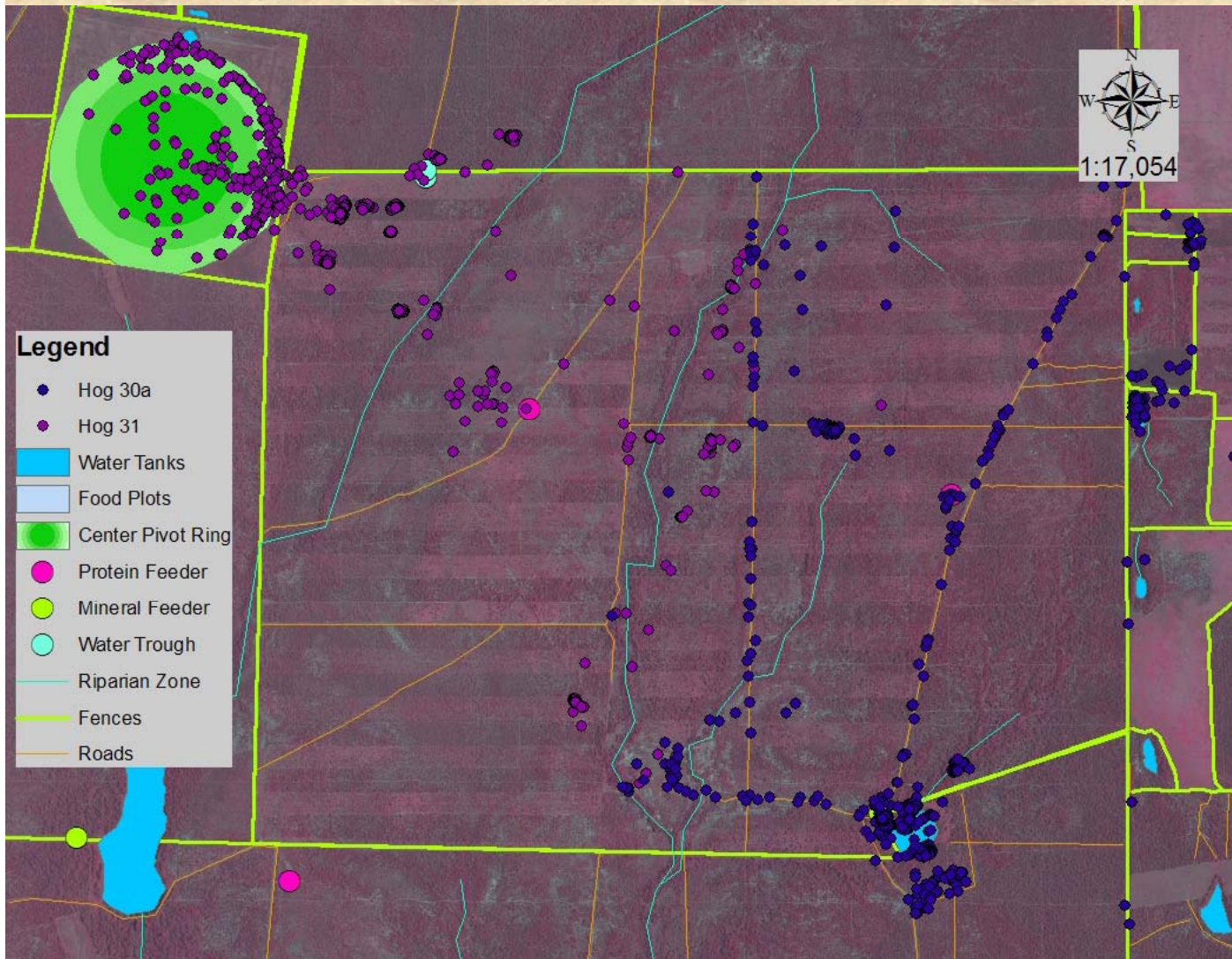
# Frequency and Types of Contact



# Hog Movements



# Anthropogenic Influence



# Sow/Cow Indirect Contact





# Hog Hunting Regulations

- **Consult TPWD regulations**
- **Exotic Species**



# Fencing

- **Not practical**
  - **Cost**
  - **Uneven terrain**
  - **Water gaps**
- **Electric fences**
  - Not practical on large scales**



# • Electrified Polywire







# Trapping Feral Hogs



Alford



Alford



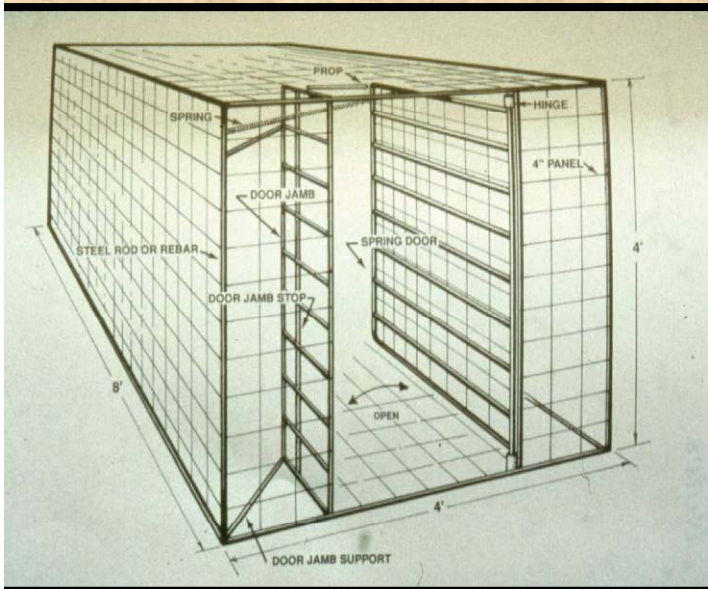
# Trapping

**Traps should  
be pre-baited**

- Whole corn
- Livestock cubes
- Carrion
- Sour grain



# Hog Traps



Cahey





# Trapping










Cathey

 **WANTED**   
**LIVE WILD HOGS**  
**TOP PRICE PAID**  
**HOG TRAPS FOR SALE**  




**WILD GAME, INC.**  
210-663-2891 DEVINE, TX  
1-800-503-4263  
**BUYING**  
**LIVE WILD HOGS**

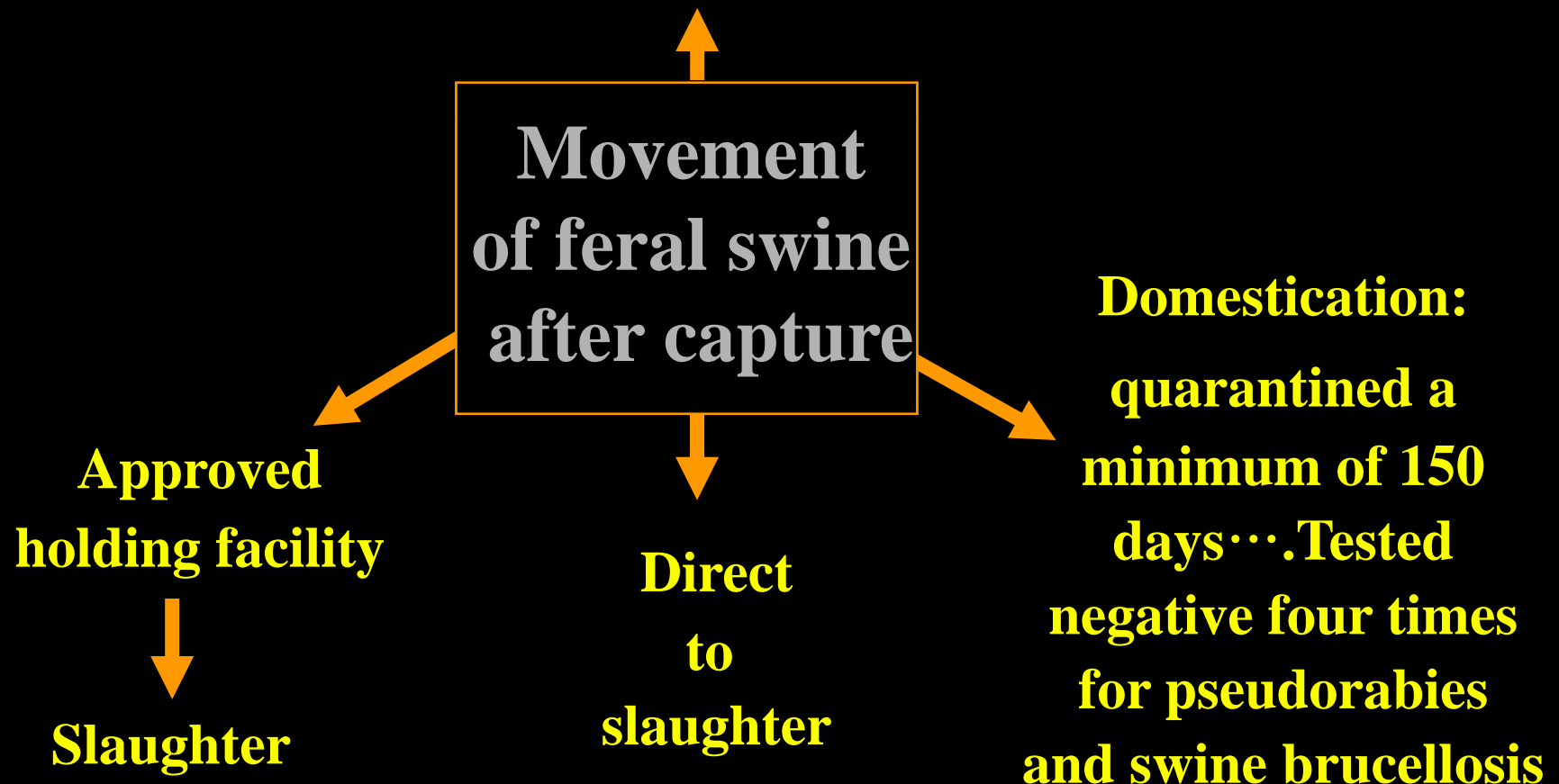
A close-up photograph of a feral pig's head resting on the ground. The pig has dark, coarse fur and its eyes are closed. The background is a sandy, light-colored ground with some dry leaves and twigs scattered around.

**New TAHC Feral Swine Regulations  
In Effect  
October 1, 2008**

# Feral Swine Regulations - Oct. 1, 2008

## SOWS AND GILTS

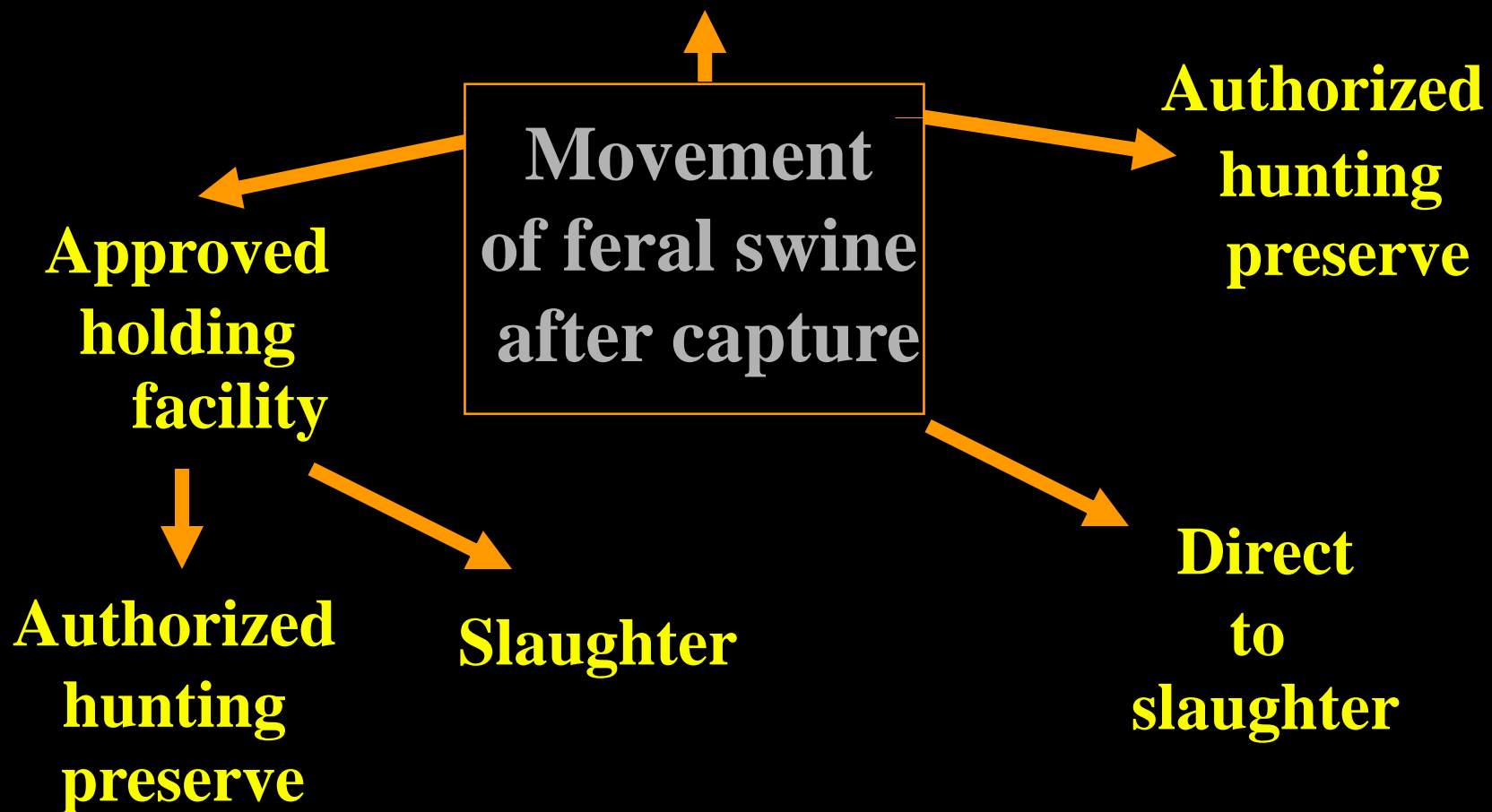
While waiting transport, can be held in escape-proof pen on trailer up to 7 days



# Feral Swine Regulations

## BOARS AND BARROWS

While waiting transport, can be held  
in escape-proof pen on trailer up to 7 days





**Approved holding facilities:**

**> 200 yards from domestic swine**

**Operator is to apply with TAHC**

**No fee, but TAHC inspection required**

**Records must be maintained on animals in/out of facility**

**“Escape” or release is a violation of the rule**



# **New Feral Swine Regulations**

**Effective October 1, 2008**

**Provides for BOARS and BARROWS to be identified and moved to a hunting preserve with swine-proof fence.**

**Hunting preserve operators shall have TPWD “Hunting Lease License,” keep records on animals in /out, identification, maintain fences, and prohibit garbage feeding.**

**Wild hogs hauled to slaughter DO NOT need to be individually identified.**

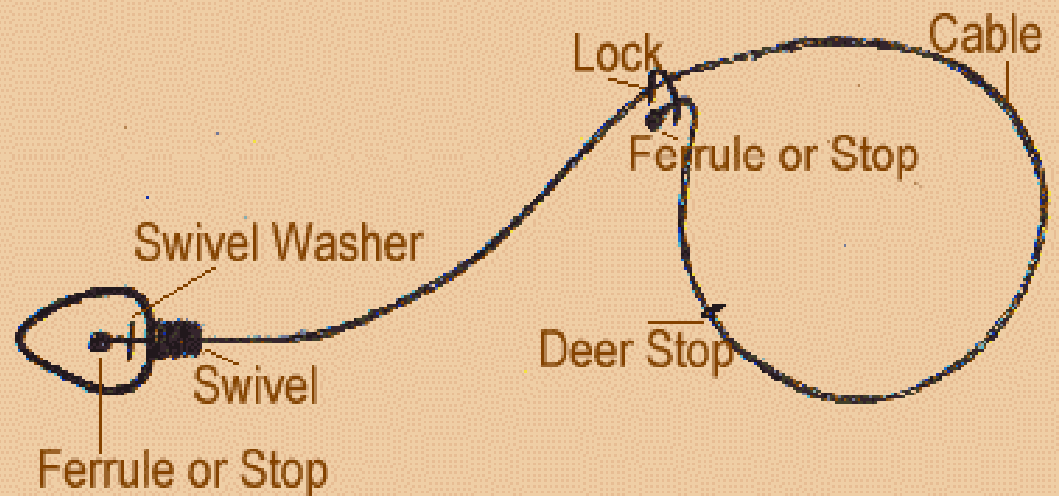




# Snare



- Caution –  
Snare traps will also catch non-target species





Cooper



- **Dogs**
  - Time intensive
  - 1 or a few hogs caught during a run
  - Can move hogs from an area
  - Rough on dogs (not your typical family pet)

# Lethal Means



- **Shooting best for individuals or small number of hogs**
- **Done during day or night**
- **Firearm safety should be considered at all times**

# Lethal Means

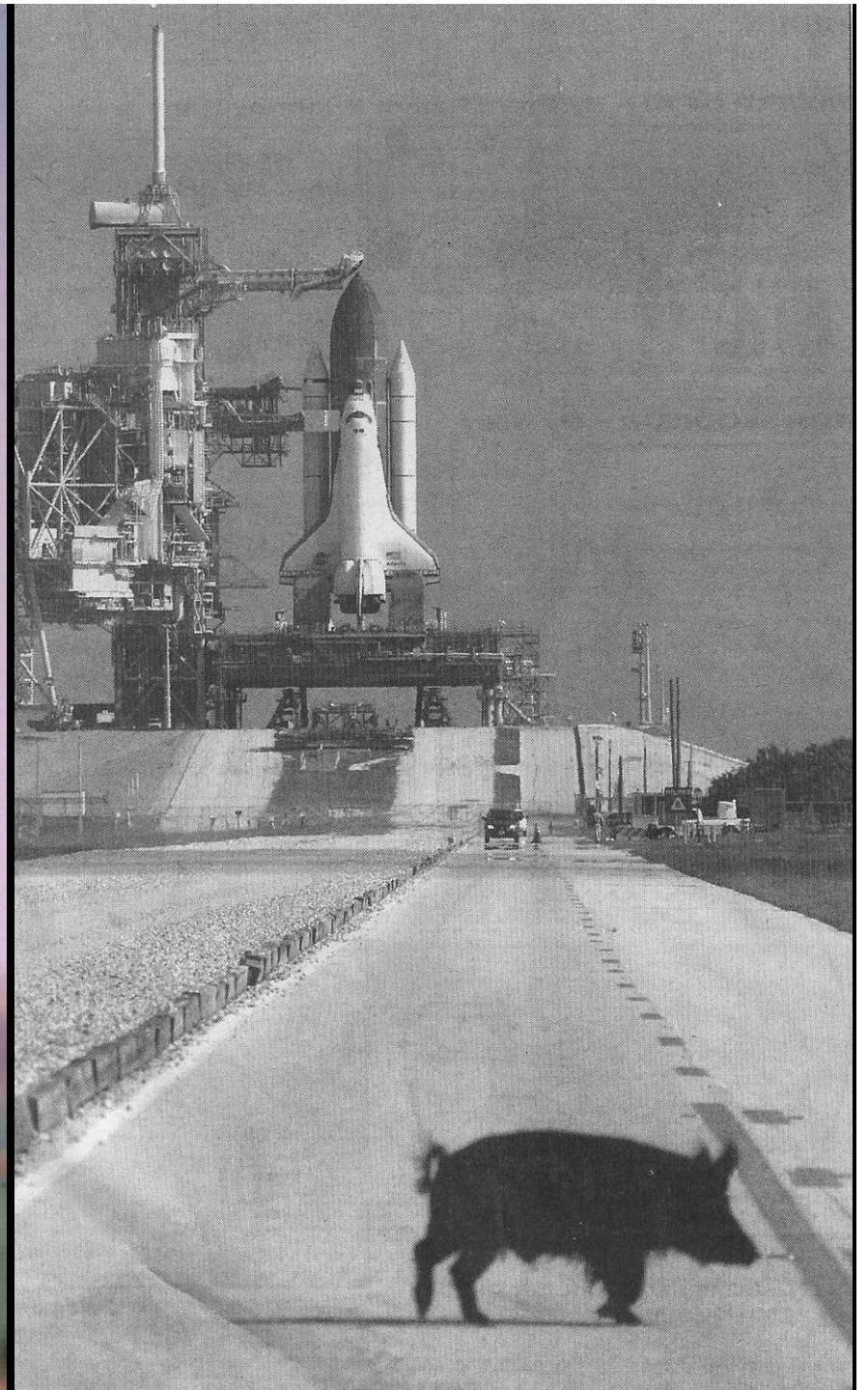
*Toxicants* are not  
legally registered for  
use against feral hogs  
in the U.S.





- **Key Word Search**
  - **feral hog TAMU**
  - **AgriLife Extension bookstore**

<http://feralhogs.tamu.edu>



# Texas Feral Hog Abatement Pilot Project

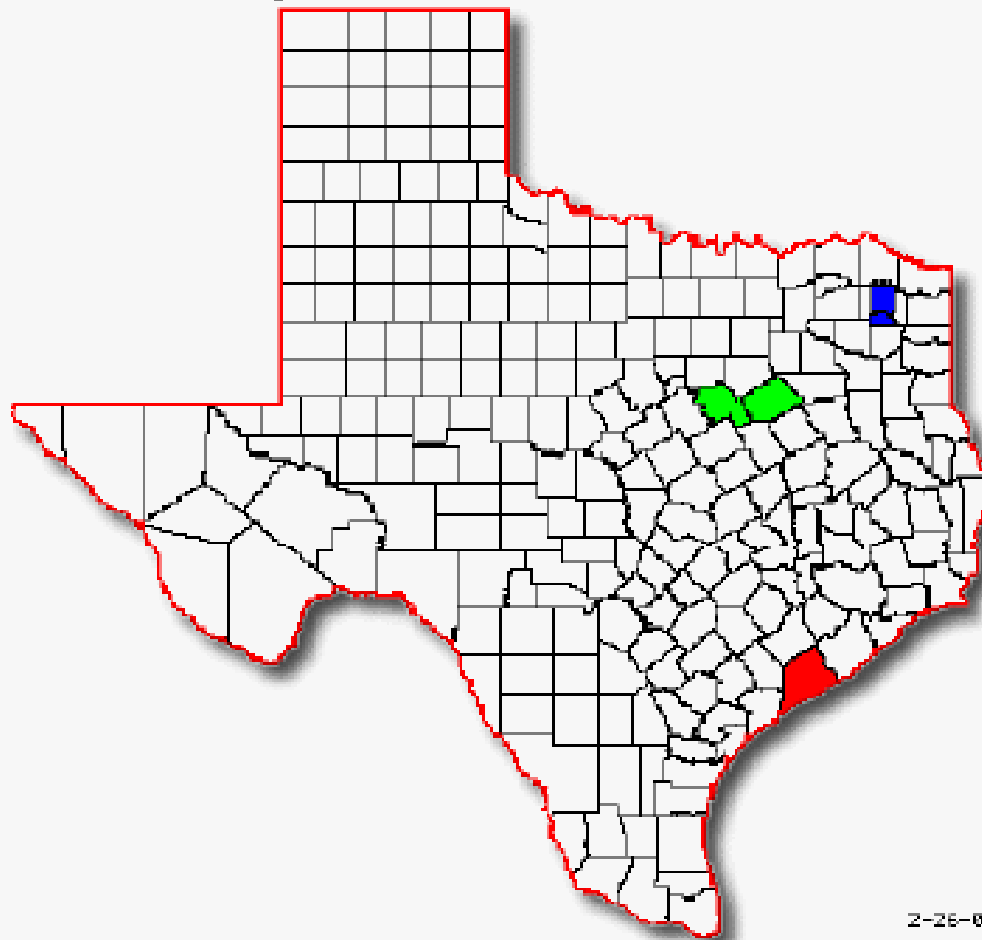
- Sponsored by Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)
- Approximately \$390,000
- January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2007



## **Sites Chosen: Different Eco-regions and Agronomic Enterprises**

- Blackland Prairie – predominately row cropping (corn, grain sorghum, cotton)
- Post Oak Savannah/Piney Woods – predominately pasture and hay production with some poultry production and specialty horticulture crops (peaches)
- Coastal Prairie – predominately rangeland, pasture, and rice

Wildlife Services Cooperator Counties

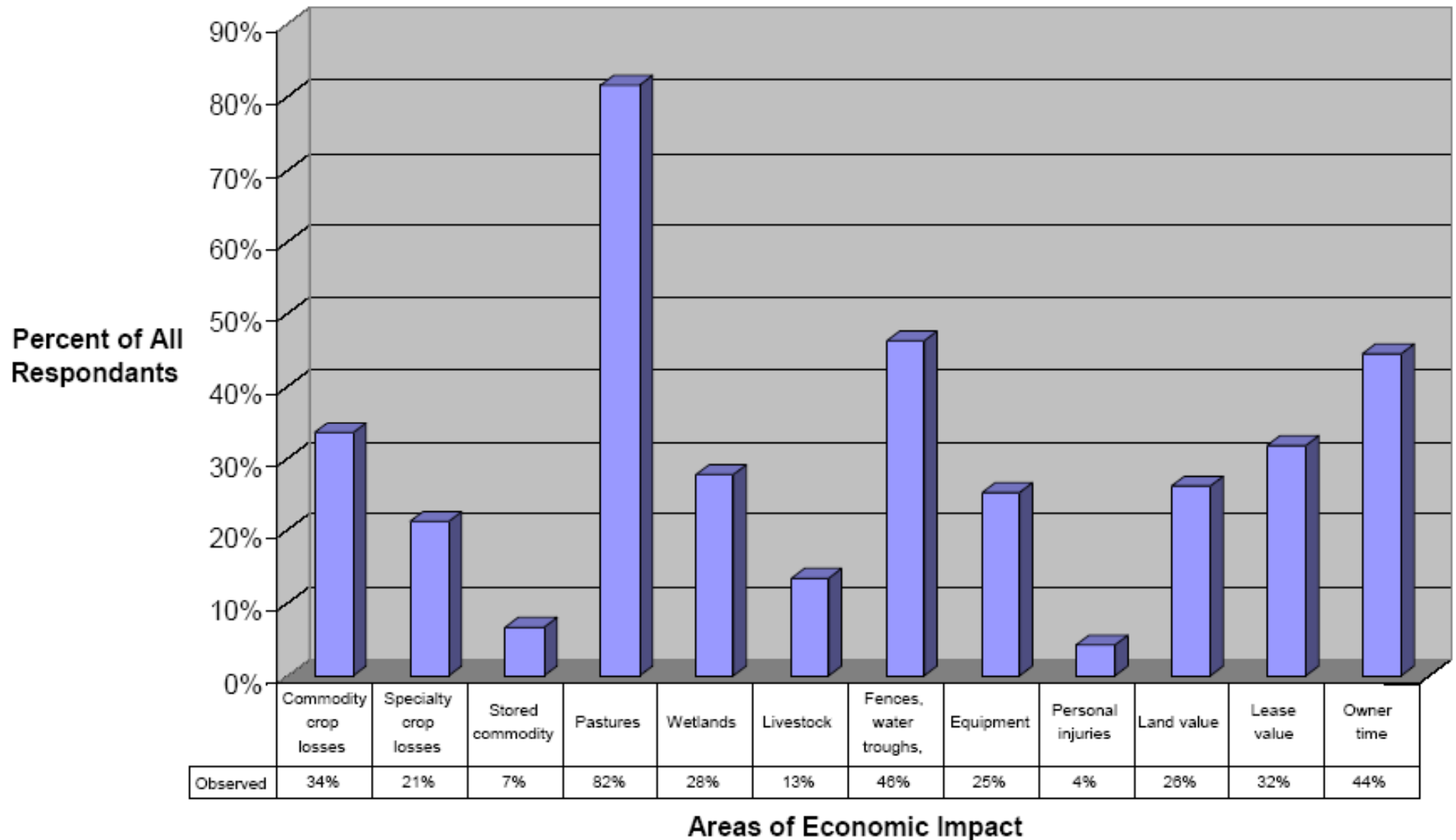


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# Landowner/Producer Survey

- Information on economic damage and subsequent costs on various enterprises
- Information on control methods and costs
- Three levels of data collection:
  - Cooperating landowner/producers allowing Wildlife Services to provide abatement
  - Landowners/producers providing abatement
  - Landowners/producers outside of project site

## Areas of Economic Impact Reported by Landowners Participating in Educational Programs, 2006-2007



# Part 1: Economic Survey and Direct Control

- Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Wildlife Services
  - 48 cooperators
  - 2005 baseline survey (\$2,228,076 est. damage)
  - 2006 and 2007 subsequent surveys





# Part 1: Economic Survey and Direct Control

- Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Wildlife Services
  - Accessed 223,017 acres in three sites
  - 3,799 hogs removed
    - aerial 36%, traps 33%, firearm 26%, snare 5%
- Direct positive economic impact \$1,480,491 in target counties
- Benefit: Cost Ratio \$6.20 to \$1.00

# Coastal Prairie

- 2005 damage estimate \$477,661
  - 146,983 acres enrolled
  - 897 hogs removed
  - Damage declined 19% or a savings of \$89,331
- 2006: 631 hogs removed
  - Damage estimates declined to \$238,930
  - a savings of another \$149,400
- 2007: 823 hogs removed (1,454 total)



# Texas AgriLife Extension Service-WS

## TDA HOG PROJECT

### COASTAL PRAIRIE

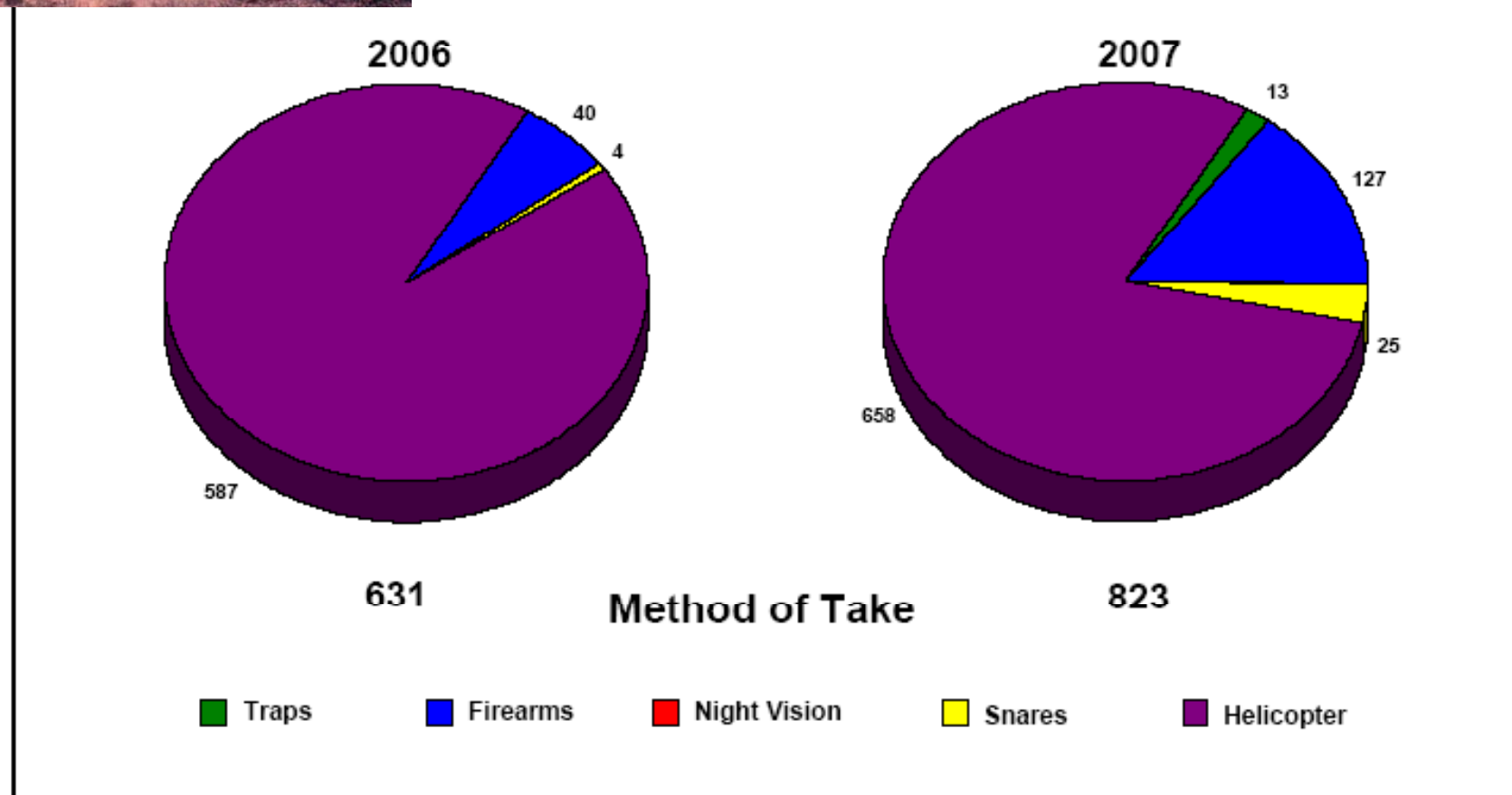
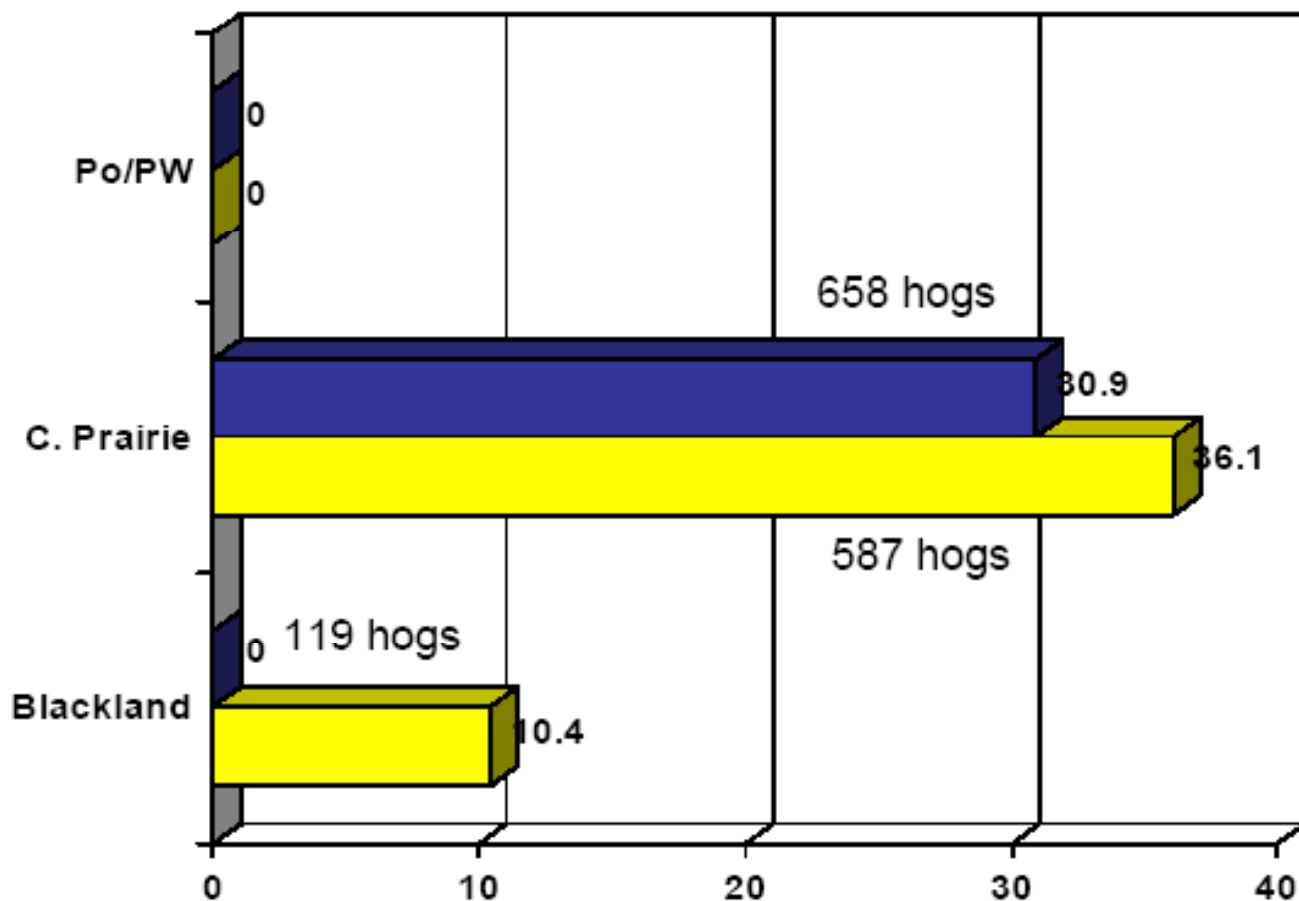


Figure 7. Number of hogs removed from the Coastal Prairie Site by year and method.

# Texas AgriLife Extension Service- WS

## TDA HOG PROJECT

Aerial Hours (17.6 hogs removed per hour of flight time)  
(\$31.25 / hog removed at \$550/hour)



■ 2007  
■ 2006

Figure 8. Hogs removed by aerial shooting by site.

# Texas AgriLife Extension Service-WS

## TDA HOG PROJECT

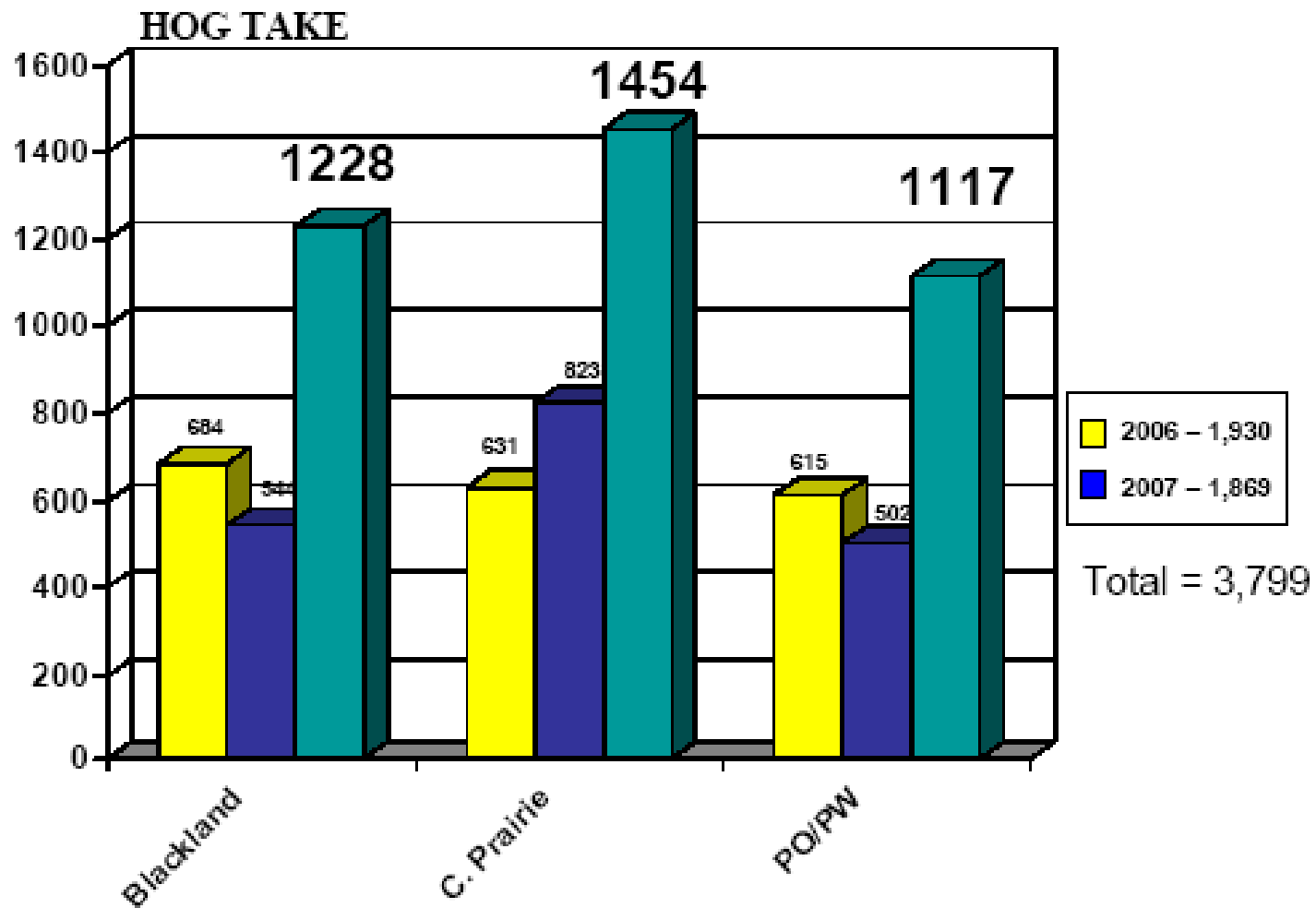


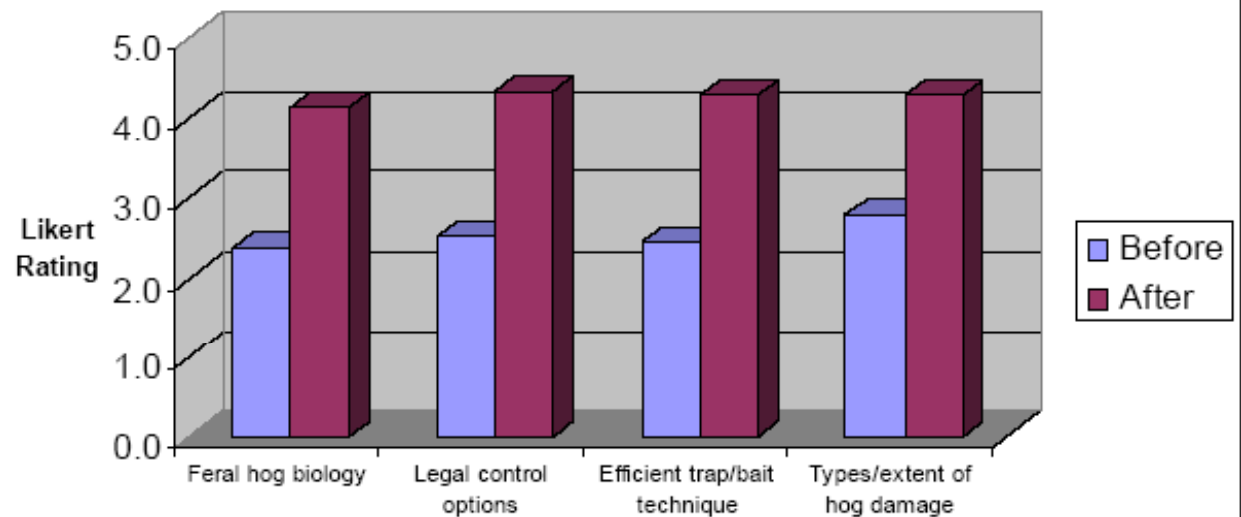
Figure 12. Number of hogs removed by site and year.

# Indirect / Education Control

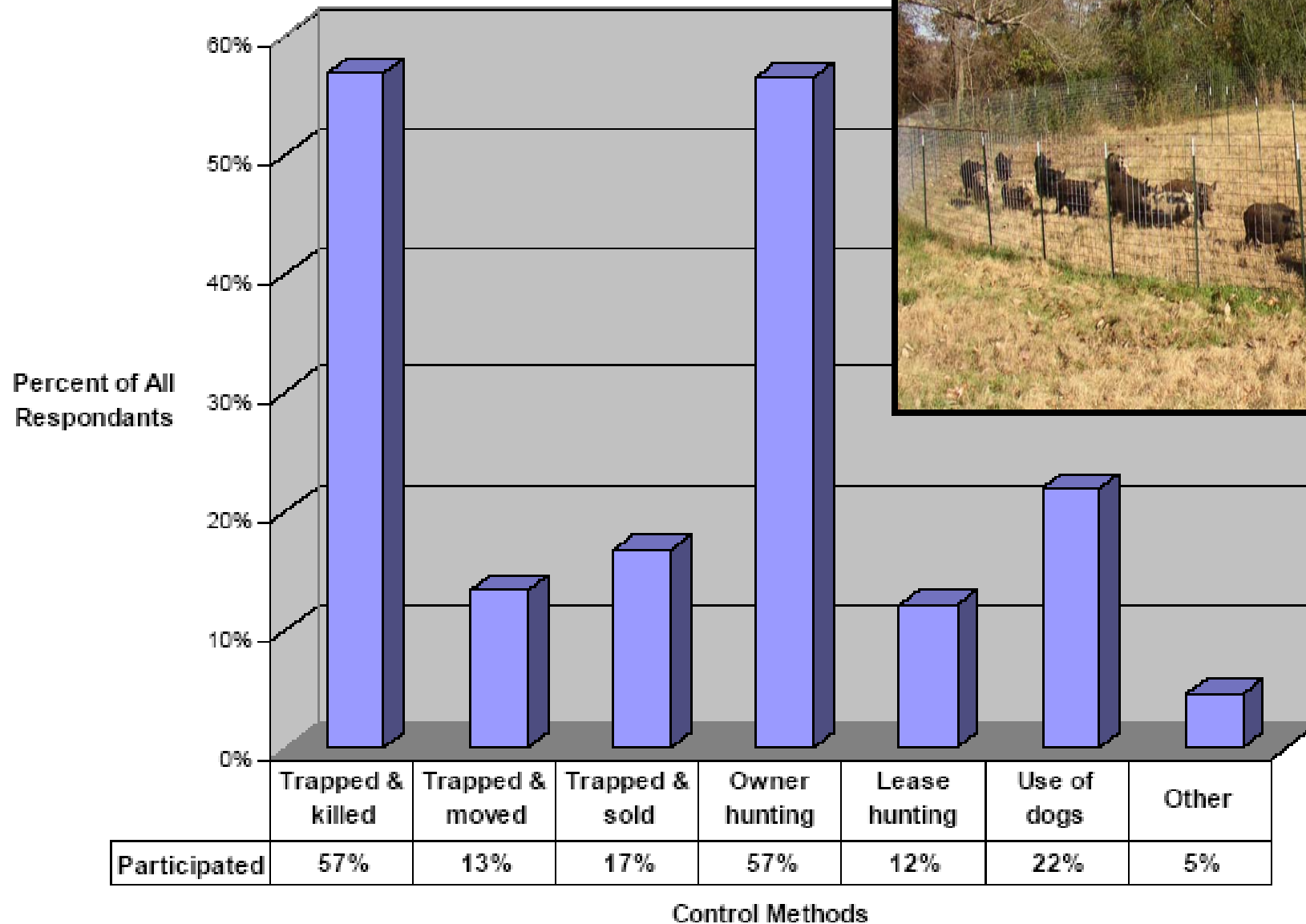
- 66 Counties reaching
- 67 programs presented
- 5,197 people attended and completed the one page survey
- Web-education (31,374 unique visitors and 76,830 pages accessed)



Knowledge ratings for selected subjects discussed during AgriLife Extension educational programs, 2007



## Control Methods Utilized by Landowners Participating in AgriLife Extension Educational Programs, 2006-2007



# Indirect / Education Control

- New management practices adopted 3.2/ participant
- Education Economic Impact \$2,978,821
- Benefit:Cost Ratio = \$19.60 to \$1.00

