

FLW Feral Hog Population Update: October 2009

Feral hogs have been reported on Fort Leonard Wood (FLW) since the late 1990's. Control measures by natural resource managers in combination with hunting have brought their numbers down on post and they were eradicated from FLW for a time. Unfortunately they are on the increase again locally.

Feral hogs are resourceful and opportunistic feeders and prolific breeders. They can be difficult to control once populations become established in an area and they are capable of dispersing or traveling quite long distances and starting populations in new areas. Populations can also become established through the illegal intentional releases of domestic or feral strains transported from other locations.

Feral hogs are a growing threat throughout Missouri and other states. They are an invasive animal that is destructive to natural habitats and competes with native wildlife for food resources. They also pose a threat to livestock and humans through the potential threat of spreading diseases. Natural resource managers from federal and state agencies throughout Missouri are trying to control the spread of these destructive animals.

Recently there have been increasing reports of hog sign and occurrences on FLW. Feral hogs have been reported on the East side of Fort Leonard Wood with regularity for the previous year and isolated occurrences continue throughout the installation. As acorns ripen and fall, feral hogs tend to move up into the uplands to take advantage of this food source. Since oak trees are present on most of FLW, it is possible to encounter feral hogs just about anywhere. We encourage hunters who may be out pursuing other game to shoot any hog that they see.

If you do kill a feral hog, they are safe to eat but care should be taken while handling and processing; plastic gloves are recommended. Blood can be tested for possible diseases if you collect a small sample immediately. Limited blood sample kits are available at the DPW Natural Resources Office, Bldg. 2112 on FLW, or from USDA Wildlife Services at (573) 499-3033 ext 13. A blood sample can also be taken in any clean jar or bottle if kept cool (not frozen) and mail it with the location of the kill and your contact information to:

Missouri Department of Agriculture Animal Health Laboratory
216 El Mercado Plaza
P.O. Box 630
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0630

Interested hunters can also check with other public land managers throughout Missouri (including the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), USFS, and U. S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE)) to find out about the possibilities of hunting hogs on their properties. We continue to hear about local hog sightings on the Mark Twain National Forest within our region near FLW. Contact the USFS Rolla office (telephone: 573-364-4621) for the latest information on Forest Service properties.

Additional information about feral hogs in Missouri and their destructive nature may be found at the MDC website <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/landown/wild/nuisance/hogs/>. To report sightings or kills and for further information about feral hogs at FLW, contact the DPW Natural Resources Wildlife Biologist 573-596-0131 ext. 67605.