

# HOG OUT TEXAS



**T**orn up plants, ruined fields, and broken fences have been seen more and more by Texas farmers in these past few years thanks to one species, which has made fields in Texas its home.

Feral hogs have become a headache for farmers because of their destructive tendencies. They are known to destroy crops and fields, as well as danger livestock across the state. The Texas Agrilife Extension Service estimates that the feral hog population causes more than \$500 million in economic damage per year.

It is currently estimated that more than 2.6 million feral hogs are living in Texas. Although there are no restrictions on hunting them, that number does not seem to be going down anytime soon.

The Texas Department of Agriculture has issued a new grant available for counties in Texas to help eradicate the feral hog population. The grant is called the County Hog Abatement Matching Program, or CHAMP for short.

Meghann Jezek, a grants assistant with the Texas Department of Agriculture, said the grant is aimed to help counties create programs and partnerships to help kill off local populations of hogs.

“The program is important because without the help of local farmers and hunters, the State of Texas would not be able to take care of the problem on its own,” Jezek said.

The Texas Department of Agriculture will also be hosting a Hog Out County Challenge through the grant for the second year in a row during late

2013-early 2014 to help bring some population control to the species. Because of the large amount of participation throughout the state last year, the department is hoping the program will become even larger this year.

In order for counties to be eligible for the program they not only had to apply with an intent to participate, but they were required to come up with a system to track the number of hogs killed such as ear notching for verification.

David White, a landowner in Wichita County, said he believes the program is an excellent way to help bring down the population of feral hogs where they are most dense.


“I’ve seen firsthand how those hogs can ruin fields and crops,” White said. “Farmers are in constant frustration in this area when it comes to protecting their fields and all that they work for.”

Not only are the counties working to control the feral hog population during these months, but they are also competing against each other to see which county can eradicate the most hogs during that short period of time.

In order to help motivate these counties to participate in the program, a monetary prize is awarded to the three counties with the most feral hog kills during the program. Last year the county with the most points won \$20,000. The second place county won \$15,000 and third place received \$10,000.

During last year’s competition, counties

participating in the program placed bounties on the animals in order to help encourage hunter participation. Many counties killed as many 1,500 feral hogs last year in their efforts for the program.

Many people in the State of Texas will agree – the feral hog population must be controlled before the problem is completely unmanageable. The Hog Out County Grant Program works on the basis of incentives, which will hopefully make a dent in their overwhelming population. 

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