

Infectious Feral Hogs

Published: Feb. 10, 2012 at 11:36 PM CST | Updated: Feb. 13, 2012 at 6:02 PM CST

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Feral hogs could be carrying infectious diseases.

Newschannel 6 crews spoke with a Texas Tech researcher. They tell us the infectious bacteria can be harmful to humans. Steve Presley, Texas Tech, Associate Professor of Environmental and Human Health comments, "It was very concerning that, that high of a percentage of those that we sampled had the bacteria and had been exposed."

50 percent of the feral hogs tested positive for Francisella Tularensis. Presley says, "They had antibodies in their system and that tells you that at some point that animal has been exposed or may be currently infected with the bacteria." Presley says Francisella Tularensis is a general bacteria, but one of its strains can be dangerous. "Different disease pathogens are more contagious and cause worse disease in humans than others. Francisella Tularensis or Tularemia is one of those that's considered highly contagious."

So contagious in fact, further lab work had to be done off site in a lab authorized by the Federal Government. Further testing showed samples taken had a less harmful strain.

Researchers are not alarmed but concerned because feral hogs cover a lot of ground and could easily pass the bacteria. Presley adds, "Our concern is that not only are they a nuances of doing damage they can also potentially move disease of livestock or humans from one area to another."

HogWild, a Clay County feral hog buying station works with these hogs daily and is not surprised to hear the news.

Wearing gloves, washing your hands, wearing eye protective goggles, are all steps you can take to protect yourself from catching feral hogs infectious bacteria.

Natalie Garcia, Newschannel 6