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## Public Notice

October 29, 2019

In order to protect land, premises, and animals from fever ticks, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Texas Animal Health Commission are advising the public of upcoming efforts to reduce the nilgai population on the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. The nilgai harvests will take place in a portion of the refuge that does not allow public hunting and will be completed by a trained, commercial operator, with 50% of the meat being donated to a non-profit organization. Harvests will occur between October 2019 and March 2020.

The refuge has been quarantined for fever ticks since November 2014. Cattle fever ticks—*Rhipicephalus annulatus* and *R. microplus*—are the most dangerous cattle ectoparasites in the United States. These ticks have been a threat to American agriculture for generations because they spread the disease bovine babesiosis, commonly called cattle fever.

Nilgai are natural hosts for fever ticks, and because they have a range of up to 25 miles, they can easily spread fever ticks into new areas. Managing the nilgai population, paired with treatment of white tailed deer and systematic treatment of domestic livestock, is essential for reducing the movement of fever ticks and eradicating the pest from the Texas landscape.

For more information, please email [feverticks@usda.gov](mailto:feverticks@usda.gov) or [public\\_info@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:public_info@tahc.texas.gov).

