



Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)

“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”

Regulations for Moving Live Feral Swine

Why does the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) care about feral swine?

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is concerned with the disease threats that feral swine pose to domestic cattle and swine herds. Tests on feral swine indicate that about 20 percent of these animals carry Pseudorabies, a flu-like swine disease NOT related to rabies, and about 10 percent have Swine Brucellosis, the swine form of Brucellosis or “Bangs” disease.

In 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature provided that the TAHC regulate the movement of live feral swine, as a measure to control the spread of disease. The intent of these regulations is to allow the movement of wild swine for hunting or slaughter, while protecting livestock from the disease risks posed by these animals.

Doesn't the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) regulate hog hunting?

Yes. The TPWD, an agency separate from the TAHC, requires the registration of hunting leases, where persons pay to hunt feral swine. Sport hunters also must have a hunting license.

If a hunting ranch does NOT receive or release live wild hogs onto the property, the TAHC feral swine regulations *do not* apply to the operation.

When do the TAHC regulations apply?

The TAHC's regulations apply when LIVE feral swine are moved from the premises where they were trapped or captured. While awaiting transport, the feral swine, may be held in an escape-proof cage on the vehicle or trailer that transported them from their original premise, or held within the transport trailer itself for as long as 7 days.

A number of pre-existing TAHC-approved holding facilities will continue in operation. These double-fenced facilities are intended to hold feral swine temporarily until a load of the animals can be assembled for shipping to their ultimate destination. Holding facilities must be

constructed at least 200 yards from domestic swine pens, and be inspected by the TAHC.

There is no fee for an approved holding facility, but the operator must apply and records must be maintained on the number and dates of feral swine being placed into and/or removed from the holding facility, the description of the animals and any identification devices, and where the animals were trapped. (To apply for an approved facility, contact your TAHC region office, or the TAHC headquarters at 800-550-8242.)

Allowing feral swine to escape from the approved holding facility, or the failure to maintain records, can lead to a penalty for violation of the rule and suspension or revocation of the approved holding facility status.

Texas has nearly three million feral swine, and increasing the population of these animals heightens the chance for disease transmission. Sows and gilts are not to be moved to hunting preserves. Although there are provisions for “domesticating” feral swine for production, this practice is not encouraged. The preferred, ultimate destination for sows and gilts is slaughter.

Boars and barrows may be moved to a hunting preserve, feral swine holding facility, or to slaughter. Boars and barrows may be moved from traps or approved holding facilities to authorized hunting preserves that are fenced adequately to prevent swine from escaping under, over or through the fence. Prior to being released, these animals must have individual identification, approved by the TAHC. (Feral swine hauled to slaughter from the holding facility do NOT need to be individually identified.)

Like the approved holding facilities, authorized hunting preserves must be approved and inspected by the TAHC. Applications may be obtained from the nearest TAHC office or by calling the TAHC headquarters. A current copy of the TPWD hunting lease license will be required.

Record keeping must be maintained, to include the date, number, description and individual identification of wild

boars and barrows released into the preserve and those removed through hunting. Fences must be kept in good repair to prevent the escape of the boars and barrows. A hunting preserve may lose its authorization if identified wild boars and barrows are detected outside the preserve fences.

What about the records?

Records maintained for approved holding facilities and authorized hunting preserves are to be kept by the facility operator and made available for inspection by TAHC personnel.

Feeding Swine:

To prevent potential disease transmission, feral and domestic swine are not to be fed garbage, which includes “restricted garbage”, raw or cooked meat, meat scraps, or a commingled mixture of meat products or by-products with other food scraps.

Chapter 55.3 of the TAHC’s regulations also prohibit feeding feral swine “unrestricted garbage”, identified as

vegetables, fruits, dairy products, or baked goods.

Is there a penalty for disregarding the feral swine regulations?

The TAHC makes every attempt to obtain compliance by providing information and sound reasoning for protecting livestock herds. However, the rules include both criminal and administrative penalties, which may be imposed for violations.

The TAHC feral swine regulations are based on Chapters 161.0412 and 161.1375 of the Texas Administrative Code (law). Noncompliance with the movement requirements is a Class C misdemeanor and repeat offenses are a Class B misdemeanor. Alternatively, the TAHC may address noncompliance with administrative penalties.

The text of the TAHC’s feral swine regulations may be obtained from the TAHC web site at www.tahc.state.tx.us, or by calling the Public Information office at 1-800-550-8242.

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