

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

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FFA Chapters to Assist with Feral Hog Traps

Last Thursday, during the feral hog trap demonstration at the Campaign for Conservation at the Capitol, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) gave 11 hog traps to conservation districts across the state of Oklahoma to aid with the ongoing efforts to control the feral swine population in the state. Due to a great reception, ODAFF is now partnering with FFA chapters to provide more traps to the remaining conservation districts.

Wildlife Services at ODAFF presented the feral swine trap to members of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC), the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) and legislators on the lawn northwest of the capitol last Thursday. Due to a tremendous response, all 85 districts will receive a welded head gate for the trap in addition to the assistance they were receiving for trap supplies.

Numerous FFA Chapters across the state have committed to helping with this project. The head gates will be paid for by a combination of sponsorships and fees collected from the captive feral swine hunting licenses as part of the Feral Swine Control act. The Oklahoma Soybean Association is sponsoring fifty of the next 100 trap gates. The traps will be made available to landowners by their conservation districts. To contact your local conservation district office, visit https://www.ok.gov/conservation/Directory/Directory_of_Conservation_District_Offices/.

The feral swine are lured into the six or eight-panel trap by bait (usually corn) and trapped in the pen after triggering the trip wire which drops the gate. A variety of techniques are used by Wildlife Services to manage feral swine, but trapping is considered one of the most effective methods in states like Oklahoma with high feral swine populations because of the ability to eliminate multiple hogs at one time. Last year, Wildlife Services eliminated 11,206 feral swine in Oklahoma.

Feral swine are an invasive species that cause more than \$1.5 billion annually in damage and management costs nationwide according to USDA. Elimination of feral swine is of special interest to the conservation districts because feral hogs' rooting and wallowing activity is proven to increase erosion, especially in wetlands and along waterways. Large groups of feral swine are responsible for contaminating water sources through deposition of fecal material in concentrated areas which results in an increased risk for disease among humans, wildlife, and livestock.

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