

Waller County AgriLife Extension Beef/Forage & Natural Resources Newsletter

Local Programs

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January 16

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Feral Hogs and Winter

Article Written By: Dr. Marcus Blum, AgriLife Extension Wildlife Specialist

As y'all are aware, resources tend to be limited during the winter months in Texas, although that varies across ecoregions and is highly dependent on precipitation patterns for that year. One notable exception may be mast-producing trees (e.g., oak, walnut, pecan, etc.), which produce valuable forage for many wildlife species during these months, although the amount produced varies annually. Nevertheless, many portions of the state are likely limited regarding forage diversity on their rangelands and in forested systems. The primary takeaway from this is that resources are limited, and that is likely going to lead to increased conflict with landowners and the public in general as feral hogs attempt to meet their nutritional needs.

These resource limitations will lead feral hogs to forage more in urban areas and venture into any areas that have accessible food resources. Those areas are also frequented by livestock during this time, thus there is an increased risk of disease transmission and direct competition for available resources. While this inevitably leads to increased property damage, there are some benefits to this congregation of feral hogs to certain resources. The primary benefit is that it can make trapping and harvesting more efficient and effective. Now I will point out that is not the case when lots of mast is on the ground, as trapping during those times is really, really difficult because of resource abundance. So if you have a strong acorn crop in your woods, then trapping will be difficult; on the positive side, it should also mean less interaction with feral hogs on the landowners' part. Now, back to resource-limited situations. When feral hogs begin congregating on the few resources available, there is an opportunity to set larger corral traps and capture higher numbers of pigs than during other parts of the year. Landowners should absolutely take advantage of these situations and attempt to remove as many feral hogs as possible.

Start by setting traps up in areas that hogs are frequenting or traveling through to access those resources. Given the limitations on the landscape, they will be much more likely to divert to the new resources you place on the landscape.

As with any corral trapping situation, do your best to remove entire sounders so that you don't educate individuals that were not captured, and result in them becoming trap shy. Another thing to keep in mind is that deer season will be concluding sooner than later. On many properties, feeding activities have conditioned feral hogs to an area, so it is easy to place a trap and capture them quickly. You've already done the pre-baiting work; you might as well take advantage of it when you are no longer concerned with disturbing deer at your favorite hunting locations. As a way to make back a few bucks for your efforts, consider selling trapped hogs at USDA-approved holding facilities.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the resource limitations are also impacting energy balances and causing feral hogs to adjust their activity into daylight periods. While we can certainly get our hot spells in Texas "winters", the cooler temperatures tend to lead to more movement during daylight hours to take advantage of warmer temperatures. Cold weather also increases the energetic needs to keep internal body temperature up, so feral hogs will increase activity during these periods to accumulate additional resources and meet those increased energetic demands. Landowners should be prepared for increased opportunities to remove feral hogs during the day with these changes in movement patterns. All of this leads to increased resource reliance and can lead to greater trapping success, as well as increased harvest through shooting.

So as temperatures continue to decline, and then rise and decline again, make sure that your landowners are aware that these are great opportunities to increase their feral hog removal efficiency. Use the resource limitations to their advantage and harvest more pork over the next few months. Remember, this is a continuous process and to make a dent in populations, we need as many producers as possible actively engaging in effective management strategies to remove feral hogs from the landscape.



Roots to Results New Landowner Series

This series is designed not only for those who are new to owning or managing rural land, but also for individuals looking to refresh their knowledge or gain more information on land stewardship, management practices, and available resources. Programs will start at 1:30 and end at 5:00. To register or for more information call 979-542-2753 or lee@ag.tamu.edu 2025-2026 schedule is below. The Waller County program will take place at the Historic Warren Ranch in Hockley.
January 16, Waller County: Grazing, Livestock, and Range
March 20, Washington County: Bees and Trees
May 15, O.D Butler Forage Field Day at Thomas Ranch in Grimes County

Private Pesticide Applicator Training

This training is designed for private pesticide applicators in Texas that want to obtain a pesticide license. Training only on January 28, testing will not be offered during this training. [Click Here to Register](#) or call the extension office.

Quarterly Beef and Forage Dinner

Dates and topics for 2026 Quarterly Beef and Forage Dinner: Jan. 28 Preparing Forages for the Growing Season, April 29 External Cattle Parasites, July 22 Summer Plant ID and IPM, and Oct. 28 Winter Feeding Strategies. The location will be the extension office. Dinner will be served at 6 and program will be from 6:00-7:30. Call the extension office to register.

Acres in Action Wildlife and Habitat Workshop

The Jan. 30 workshop will take place at the Washington County Expo Center in Brenham. Topics will include wildlife diseases, vultures & predators, habitat management for reptiles, tree diseases and wildlife habitat, and grazing and wildlife. This workshop will be of interest to any landowners or individuals who want to learn how to manage habitat for our local wildlife. [Click Here to Register](#) or call the extension office.

Branching Out: An Orchard Growers' Seminar

This seminar will help new or prospective growers from backyard to 100-acre orchards. The topics will also be of interest to established growers. The seminar will take place on Jan. 31 at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Hempstead. Program will start at 9:00. [Click here to Register](#) or call the extension office.

Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference

The 41st annual conference will take place on Feb. 17 in Rosenberg. Multiple tracts will be offered including backyard gardeners, 5-hour CEU for agriculture pesticide applicators, and market gardeners. For more information contact the Fort Bend County Extension Office, 281-342-3034.

South Central Texas AG Conference

This 5-hour CEU program will take place at Vonderosa Farms in Hempstead on Feb 25. CEU offered will include 2 general, 2 IPM, and 1 L&R pending TDA approval. More information and registration will be available later this month.

Can You ID these Winter Weeds? Answers bottom of page



Top to Bottom: Bastard Cabbage, Henbit, Shepherd's Purse