



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

**FERAL SWINE WORKING GROUP\***

**Chair: Gray Anderson (Virginia)**  
**Vice-Chair: Jim LaCour (Louisiana)**

**Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**3:15 PM – 5:15 PM (CDT)**  
**Majestic H – Conference Center Upper Level**

[North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#)

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Call to Order/Review Agenda (G. Anderson)**

- Bryant White, AFWA staffer, chaired the meeting with approval from the Chair
- The meeting was called to order and the agenda was reviewed
- 33 members and guests attended the meeting

**Introductions (G. Anderson)**

- Attendees represented numerous state and federal agencies and NGOs

**National Feral Swine Damage Management Program update (Dana Cole, APHIS)**

- APHIS National Feral Swine Damage Management Program Objectives
  - Eliminate feral swine in states where populations are low or newly emerging
  - Reduce feral swine numbers to minimize damage in states where populations are large and widely distributed
- 2018 Farm Bill (Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program)
  - 5 year funding of \$75 million divided equally between APHIS & NRCS
  - WS provides direct control of feral swine, training and outreach, disease monitoring, and evaluates effectiveness of operational activities.
  - As the FSCP enters its last year:
    - Some pilot project areas have eliminated feral swine.
    - In other pilot project areas additional work is needed to ensure populations continue to decline.
    - APHIS WS is working with partners to identify resources to continue work in some areas at the conclusion of the 2018 Farm Bill.
- African Swine Fever (ASF) Prevention
  - Since August 2021, APHIS WS has conducted enhanced operational activities in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands to reduce the risk of ASF entry and spread in the feral swine population
  - Over 96 APHIS WS employees have deployed for approximately 4,534 days in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to eliminate free-roaming and feral swine.
  - As a result of enhanced operations, APHIS has removed 4,165 feral swine and sampled 2,666 in the territories of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. All samples have been negative for ASF.



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- Operational activities continue in PR, and surveillance monitoring ongoing in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John.
- As a result of enhanced operations, APHIS has removed 4,165 feral swine and sampled 2,666 in the territories of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. All samples have been negative for ASF.
- Operational activities continue in PR, and surveillance monitoring ongoing in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John.
- Canadian “Super” Pigs
  - Smithsonian Magazine article February 2023
  - Numerous media inquiries regarding US response
  - The US northern border states have been aware of these feral pigs in Canada for some time and have established cross border collaborations,
  - A Transboundary working group already exists; collaboration includes the development of a outreach campaign called “Squeal on Pigs”
  - The “Squeal on Pigs app” for reporting pig sightings is currently being piloted in several northern states.
  - Resources are designated to help northern border states eliminate new incursions of pigs if there is a siting of feral swine
  - Working with ND to expand feral swine surveillance capacity in vulnerable northern states
- Research Areas
  - Sodium Nitrite toxicant
    - Field studies just completed early March 2023
    - Data currently being analyzed
  - Carriage of Foodborne pathogens
  - Human Dimensions of Food Market Chains
  - Wetland Damage Assessment
  - Economic Impact of Program

**Update from WMI on the new report on agency rules and regulations regarding feral swine management (Bill Moritz)**

- Objective: Determine the current states of statutes, regulations, and policies on the translocation and movement of feral swine for fifty (50) state wildlife agencies and provide recommendations that increase uniformity and effectiveness.
- Response Rate:
  - Completed surveys received from 78 of 97 individuals (80.4%)
  - At least one response from 47 of the 50 states surveyed.
- The report covers:
  - Distribution of Feral Swine
  - Legal Definitions of Feral Swine
  - Importation of Feral Swine
  - Transportation of Feral Swine
  - Release of Feral Swine
  - Hunting Feral Swine
  - Disease Testing Feral Swine
  - Recommendations:
    - Review and update your state’s definition of feral swine.



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- 2) Review and update regulations concerning importation.
  - 3) Work with swine owners, including pet owners, to ensure facilities are capable of preventing escape of Suidae species.
  - 4) Gold Standard for transportation is to require an intrastate transportation license/permit combined with adequate tracking of the license/permit use.
  - 5) Review and update penalties for intentional release of feral swine.
  - 6) Reconsider need for a hunting license to remove feral swine.
  - 7) Considering threat of African Swine Fever, consider moving to active surveillance of feral swine and review importation regulations.
- The report will be posted on the WMI and AFWA website in the coming weeks. In lieu of trying to capture the contents of the report in our minutes, we will provide the link once the report is published.

**Report from the SEAFWA & MAFWA Feral Swine Groups (provided by Terri Brunjes (KY))**

- Please see the Appendix for the report provided

**Report from the National Wild Pig Task Force (G. Anderson)**

- Dr. John Tomecek (TAMU) is the new chair of the NWPTF
- The Task Force has an annual meeting planned for April 20, 2023 in Logan, UT.
- The NWPTF hosts an International Wild Pig conference every other year. The next conference will be held in Nashville, Tennessee in the spring of 2024.
- For additional information on the NWPTF please visit: <https://nwptf.org/>

**Updates on progress from last meeting (Bryant White, AFWA)**

- The Working Group plans to develop a Hunter education pamphlet/one pager on: Impacts of feral swine on popular game species in the United States
- A draft of the document was presented to the Working Group
- The Group approved the continued development of the document and members will be asked to provide comments
- Additionally, the Group may develop more pamphlets to educate the public on how feral swine can impact other recreational opportunities. These pamphlets will be developed in conjunction with partner agencies.

**Next steps and Wrap-up Discussion (G. Anderson/J. LaCour)**

- Continue to develop feral swine impacts to hunting pamphlet
  - Circulate pamphlet to reviewers
  - A first draft is expected by July 1
  - A final draft by August 15
  - The group will seek approval from the Invasive Species Committee at the next meeting (Calgary, Alberta, Canada, September 2023) to distribute the document to agencies.

Appendix:

Report from the SEAFWA & MAFWA Feral Swine Working Groups

## **2023 SEAFWA/MAFWA Update**

March 13, 2023

### Kansas- Shane Hesting

USDA-APHIS-WS is finishing up the bulk of their feral swine control in Kansas at this time. Those numbers will soon be added to the totals.

USDA is holding the line in Kansas. I think the eradicated populations are now up to 13 or 14. Feral hogs still cross over from Oklahoma into Sumner County and east to Cherokee County. Additionally, feral hogs still have hooves on the ground from Cherokee County north to Miami County. Those border areas consistently get spillover from our neighboring states.

I heard sodium nitrite will be more widely used within 3 years, which would include use in Kansas.

Potbelly pigs have made the news several times in Kansas over the last couple months. It seems the potbellies were thinking feral swine were hogging all the media coverage. More reports of potbelly pigs have been received by KDWP and USDA this year than any other year.

### Louisiana- Jim Lacour

About the only thing I have to report is progress LSU's sodium nitrite toxicant is being held up because EPA does not consider the university a state registration agency and therefore EPA wants 500K for the experimental use permit (EUP) to perform testing on the landscape outside of their pen. Additionally, EPA can take up to 18 months to approve the EUP on the front end. And, they have extended their time for approval of all registrations to 36 months from 24 months once all peer-reviewed testing is performed. We will never get a pig toxicant at this rate!

### Kentucky- Terri Brunjes

The KY Wild Pig Eradication Task Force recently held a meeting to discuss the possibility of promoting a prohibition on wild pig hunting. The Task Force agreed that a prohibition on wild pig hunting was necessary to remove incentives for illegal release and allow for the best chance for complete eradication. This will be presented to the KY Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission at the next commission meeting as a Discussion Item. If it passes through, it will become an Action Item to be voted on at the following Commission meeting.

### Georgia – Kevin Lowrey

Kevin Lowrey- provided a report from the Bear-Resistant Product Testing Committee.

## **Bear-Resistant Product Testing Committee March 6, 2023 Meeting Notes**

### Participants:

#### Present:

Adam Hammond (GA), Jim LaCour (LA), Colleen Olfenbuttel (NC), Dave Telesco (FL)

#### Absent:

Dan Gibbs (TN), Kevin Lowrey (GA), Kurt Vercauteren (USDA-WS)

#### Guests:

Mike Orlando (FL)

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- The Bear-Resistant Product Testing Committee met to walk through WMI's update from November 2022 on the pilot testing at the captive facility and field sites
  - Dave shared with the Committee that he has been promoted and therefore will not be able to continue in his role on this Committee, and introduced Mike Orlando who was hired into Dave's old position, so can take up Dave's role on the Committee
  - The Committee discussed the idea of reducing testing contact time from 60 to 30 minutes given the difficulties in keeping the interest of captive bears, especially when the products they are testing don't break or open up.
  - Colleen pointed out that she had asked Patti about whether she could look at the time it takes for bears to break not products at the Wolf and Grizzly Discovery Center. If we had data that showed that, if a product is going to fail, 90% of the time it will fail within the first 20 minutes of contact, we could justify reducing the contact time. Colleen had asked Patti for this information in September 2022 but as of January 2023, the data had not been provided.
  - Colleen indicated that, while there are two captive black bears at the captive facility in NC, only one actually takes part in the testing. She said that due to staffing and timing issues, they would not continue to test products if they had to try and keep the 60-minute contact requirements. One particular challenge is that the NC facility tests products before the facility opens, which restricts the time they can use to test.
  - Mike pointed out that the captive facility in FL has 2.5 bears that test (the 0.5 us just a yearling but already showing interest) and they use it as enrichment for the bears, adding

scent and lure on the product's exterior. They also test while the public is present, using it as a way to educate the public of why they test and the importance of keeping bears out of human foods. Both of these elements seem to make it easier for the FL facility to achieve the 60-minute contact time requirement.

- Dave and Jim talked about how the Committee had spent a fair amount of time discussing the 60-minute time frame when drafting the protocols and felt that it was important to keep them in place until we see data that would show it was not necessary. Further, Dave pointed out that the IGBC testing is pegged at 60 minutes, and they have been around for decades and have not decided to reduce their time. Since we are new to testing, it would seem prudent to follow their lead. We also do not want any perception that we are making it easier to pass products, because there is already discussion that black bear testing is not going to be as rigorous as brown bear testing.
- The Committee agreed that we should ask Patti to find a new facility to replace NC. Dave had provided Patti with a contact for a facility with multiple bears in TX previously, and Nate said that a facility in Springfield, MO had expressed interest when the idea was floated to them previously.
- The Committee continued to stress that captive facilities involved in testing should have multiple bears that would take part in the testing to ease the challenge of obtaining 60 minutes of contact time with just one bear.
- Dave asked whether we could find another representative for wild hogs for the committee, as we seem to have more bear reps than hog reps. Jim suggested we contact Allan Leary from MO, as he is responsible for wild hogs in MO and likely would be willing to serve.
- Colleen shared concerns about recent discovery of CWD in NC, and shared that her agency is restricting baiting to only during the hunting season in affected counties, so could impact the field test site at some point
- The Committee wanted to be kept up to date on WMI activities, including when tests are scheduled with enough advance notice so a state biologist could arrange to be present.
- The Committee posed the following questions to WMI:
  - How are companies aware of the testing program? Is WMI actively advertising?
  - Can data from the IGBC testing be shared so the Committee can see when most products fail?
  - Have there been challenges with getting the full 60-minute of contact time at the facility in OK?
  - Has Patti contacted other captive facilities with multiple bears? Does she need/want to contact the facility in Springfield, MO