



Wild Pig Trapping

Alabama NRCS Job Sheet
AL645G



Saloon Door Trap; Eddie Parham Alabama NRCS

Overview

Wild pigs have become an ever increasing nuisance in Alabama. They destroy native plants and habitats, cause erosion problems, and compete with native wildlife for food. In addition, they can cause massive crop damage and transmit diseases to domestic livestock. Wild pig populations in Alabama are known to carry both pseudo rabies and swine brucellosis. In the southeast, trapping is the most cost and time-effective method for removing pigs. NRCS requires minimum trap specifications and has worked with the USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to develop the minimum specifications listed in this document.

Pre-baiting and Monitoring

Wild pigs are creatures of habit. As long as there is a food source and they are not disturbed, they will visit the same location to feed on a daily (or nightly) basis. It is very important to pre-bait the trap site to attract the animals and get them conditioned to the trap. Pre-baiting is essential to ensure good trapping success.

If the trap has not been built yet, pre-bait several likely trap sites with buckets that have been partially filled with corn and topped off with water. The site that gets the most use is where the trap should be built.

The door should be wired open during pre-baiting to allow the animals to come and go as they want. This allows all of the animals, even the most wary of the group, to feel comfortable feeding inside the trap.

After finding pig sign in the trap for the first time, pre-baiting will need to continue for up to 2 weeks. Actual pre-bait time will depend on whether the entire sounder is entering the trap. It is very important to be patient during the pre-baiting time to ensure conditioning all of the pigs to enter the trap on a regular basis before setting it.

When refreshing the bait on a site, wear rubber boots and gloves to minimize human odor. The best way to pre-bait is to use a timed feeder to dispense bait each day at 30 minutes after dawn and 30 minutes before dark. This minimizes human disturbance in the trap area and is very convenient. To monitor trap use during pre-baiting, install a trail/game camera in a location that will capture photographs of the area in front of the trap door and trap door itself. After downloading photos, try to count the total number of pigs visiting the trap site. Also, identify as many individuals as possible. Individual pigs can be identified by color pattern, size and even scars. To ensure the entire sounder (group) is captured, keep pre-baiting until your trail camera confirms all pigs in the sounder are entering the trap. During pre-baiting and trapping period, do NOT shoot at or otherwise harass pigs.

Trap Materials

The main body of the trap should be built using 16 foot feedlot panels. The panels should be 5 feet in height (60 inches) and have openings no larger than 4 inches by 4 inches. In order to maintain durability and strength, thickness of panel wire should be at least 6 gauge, with 4 gauge or .25 inch being preferred. Panels meeting these requirements are commonly referred to as "horse panels" or tall "goat panels". Note that goat panels

also come in a 4 foot height and those do NOT meet specifications. Five foot tall goat panels may have to be special ordered.

The door should have an opening at least 3 ft. high and 3 ft. wide. Total height of door area must be 5 feet to keep pigs from escaping over the door. These doors should be fabricated out of metal or pressure treated plywood which is suitable for heavy use. The frame for the door must be constructed of similar metal or pressure treated lumber. Keep in mind that treated plywood left in the weather year round can have a tendency to warp and cause catch failures. If treated plywood is used, be sure to store doors under roof when not being used for trapping.

Solid steel T-posts will be used to support the panels and the door assembly. These must meet a minimum density of 1.25 pounds per linear foot and be at least 6 feet long.

Trap Door Designs

There are numerous door designs that can be used. The simplest are falling door styles. They work well, but they are single catch only and no other pigs can enter the trap after they are tripped. The "root door" and the "saloon door" designs are both "continuous catch" designs.

Continuous Catch Designs

The root door design uses gravity to hold the door closed and the saloon door design uses springs to hold it closed. Pigs on the outside can push through and enter the trap after it has been tripped. If there happens to be a pig on the outside of the trap when the door is tripped, it can push against the one-way door and enter the trap. Recent research has shown that this only happens occasionally, but every pig that is caught is one less pig to replenish the population.

With either design, a see-through "window" should be placed in the door or an open designed door should be used that allows the animals to see into the trap.

Drop Door Designs

The two most common drop door designs are the guillotine design and the swinging drop door design.

The guillotine design incorporates a door that fits in a frame which allows it to slide up and down. It is similar to the door design used in constructing rabbit boxes.

The swinging door design functions similar to the root door design, except it is fully vertical when it is

closed and it has a latch that holds it shut after it trips.

Trap Construction

Number of panels per trap really depends on the number of pigs in the sounder you are trying to catch. The larger the trap is, the more likely the entire sounder of hogs will be trapped at the same time. Three or four panels will handle most sounders, but be flexible enough to add more panels for larger sounders where needed.

The panels should be formed into a circular shape. These panels are flexible and can be bent to form these shapes. Under no circumstances should there be corners in the trap. When trapped, pigs tend to bunch up in corners and some may escape. Make sure there are no gaps along the bottom of the panels where pigs might try to dig out.

Solid steel T-posts should be driven into the ground every 4 ft. to support the panels. Panels should be securely wired to posts and the panel ends should be wired together with a few inches of overlap.

The horse panels will be tied to the T posts with 14 gauge or larger galvanized steel wire. They should be tied in four places: the bottom, about 1 ft. up from the bottom, 3 ft. from the bottom and at the top. T-posts will also be used to secure the prefabricated trap door to the ground. The door should also be secured to the trap panels with wire.

The trigger cord should be of a material that will be strong, but still light enough to release quickly, such as heavy nylon rope, aircraft cable or coated wire. The trigger design should incorporate pulleys or eye bolts at each turn to keep the trigger cord from binding.

The root gate and other falling door designs work well with the standard root trigger. Two wooden or metal stakes are driven into the ground near the back of the trap at a 90 degree angle from the direction of the trigger line. The trigger cord is tied to the middle of the trigger (a wooden or metal rod). This trigger is set when the door is pulled open and the tightened cord is hooked over the trigger stakes. Bait is scattered around the trap, with a concentration along the sides of the trap. The first pigs will go to the areas of high bait concentration. The intent is to give enough time for the entire sounder to enter the trap before one feeds near the trigger. Hogs feeding near the trigger eventually bump it and release the trap door.

The saloon door trigger is set as a simple trip cord. The cord is run from the trigger (a wooden or metal rod long enough to hold the saloon doors fully

open) to the top of one side of the back of the trap, then down to a level of about 10 inches off the ground and then across to the opposite side of the trap. Bait is scattered around the trap with concentrations along each side. A little bait is placed on both sides of the trip cord. Again, the intent is to give enough time for the entire sounder to enter the trap and feed before the cord is tripped.

There are many other trigger designs being used to release pig trap doors. If one trigger system does not produce the results you want, then experiment with another design.

The traps should be located in an area with all day shade covering most of the trap. Hogs do not have sweat glands and cannot regulate their temperature very well in full sun. They can die quickly and inhumanely without shade.

State Laws, Permits and Carcass Disposal

It is important to contact your local conservation officer before trapping during hunting season if hunting will take place on the property. Since food type baits are placed to attract pigs, this action has potential to violate Section 9-11-244, Code of Alabama, which prohibits the baiting, feeding and simultaneous hunting of protected game animals and birds. Your local conservation officer with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources can evaluate your particular situation, such as distance, terrain, visibility, species being hunted, etc.

Traps should be checked daily. Trapped pigs should be (euthanized) dispatched immediately. It is illegal to move live wild pigs (feral hogs) in Alabama without a permit from the Alabama Department of Conservation. These permits are only written to move live animals to a processing

facility where they will be dispatched. Contact your local Alabama Department of Conservation Law Enforcement Officer for details. ***Under no circumstances should wild pigs be moved and released. This practice violates Alabama law.***

Pig carcasses should be disposed of properly. Wild pigs in Alabama carry many diseases that can be transmitted to humans and domestic animals. The State Veterinarian with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries is responsible for approving methods of dead animal carcass disposal. Composting is an effective way of disposal. See Alabama NRCS Guide Sheet AL317C, Composting Game Carcasses, for more information. Another option is burial. See Alabama NRCS Job Sheet AL316, Emergency Disposal of Dead Animals, for more information.

REFERENCES

A Landowner's Guide for Wild Pig Management: Practical Methods for Wild Pig Control. Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Publication ANR-1397.

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1397/ANR-1397.pdf>

Georgia Department of Natural Resources. September 2003.

<http://feralhogs.tamu.edu/files/2010/05/Feral-Hogs-in-Georgia.pdf>

Cooperative Extension Service

http://www.extension.org/feral_hogs

NOTE: Refer to the Trap Construction section and Check List contained within this Job Sheet to ensure your trap will meet specifications.



Root Door Trap with pig in mid-air jump trying to escape.
Photo courtesy of Travis Carnley Alabama NRCS.



Root Door Trap. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Hatcher Alabama NRCS.



Root Gate Trap Door. Photo courtesy of Adam Sconyers Alabama NRCS.



Root Door "Trainer". Door is made into 3 sections, each swings independent of the others. Door sections swing both ways during pre-baiting phase. A metal stop is installed when setting trap so door will only swing to inside. Photo courtesy of Eddie Parham Alabama NRCS.



Root Gate Trap Door. Made into 3 segments that are one way only. Photo courtesy of Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service.



Trap Door - Guillotine or Drop Door.
NOTE: THIS DOOR WOULD NEED TO BE BUILT WITH HORSE PANELS OR SIMILAR TO MEET ALABAMA SPECIFICATIONS. CATTLE PANELS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. Photo courtesy of Jason Harris and "Superior Hog Traps" in Clinton, LA



Root Door Trigger Mechanism. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Hatcher, Alabama NRCS.



Saloon Door Trap
Photo courtesy of Mike Harris Alabama NRCS.



Saloon Door Trap.
Photo courtesy of Eddie Parham Alabama NRCS.



Saloon Door Trap.
Photo courtesy of Adam Sconyers NRCS Alabama.



Saloon Door - Trigger Mechanism.
Photo courtesy of Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service.



Saloon Door Trap.
Photo courtesy of Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Feral Hog Trapping (AL645G) Checklist

Minimum Specifications

- ___ Minimum 6 gauge panel wire (must be 6 or 4 gauge or .25 inch wire)
- ___ Minimum 5 foot (60 inch) trap height at all points
- ___ Minimum of 3 panels per trap (4 recommended)—16 foot panels
- ___ Maximum 4 inch by 4 inch panel openings (commonly referred to as “horse” or tall “goat” panels)
- ___ Trap must be constructed in round shape without corners
- ___ Heavy, solid steel (1.25 pound/linear foot) construction 6 foot T-posts must be placed no more than 4 feet apart securing panels in place
- ___ Door and door frame can either be all metal or pressure treated wood construction
- ___ Trap must be constructed in location with shade covering trap

NOTE:

It is illegal to move live feral hogs in Alabama without a permit from the Alabama Department of Conservation. These permits are only written to move live animals to a processing facility where they will be dispatched. Contact your local Alabama Department of Conservation Law Enforcement Officer for details. Under no circumstances should feral hogs be released. This practice violates Alabama law.