

AL402 / SELF-ASSEMBLED TRAP

Overview

The Feral Swine population and range has made a dramatic impact in Alabama. They vary in color, shape, and size. Feral Swine can reproduce and populate an area very quickly. They have become a nuisance in Alabama by consuming agricultural crops, trampling agricultural land, preying on newborn livestock, causing timber damage by rubbing intensely on the bark layer making the trees more vulnerable to harmful insects, destroying native plants, and causing water quality and erosion issues. They are known to carry diseases that can be transmitted to livestock and humans. Trapping has become the preferred method of reducing the Feral Swine population.

Scouting and Identifying

After identifying that feral swine are located on your property causing damage, spend time scouting the property for their activity areas. Locate the heavy use areas where the feral swine travel, are rooting, wallowing, or trampling and locate their bedding areas. Mount a game camera in the area to help determine how many groups and the number of feral swine that will need to be removed from the property.

Before selecting a site to build the trap, pre-bait several likely trap areas with buckets that have been partially filled with corn and topped off with water. The area that gets the most use is where the trap should be built. Monitoring the area daily is important in being successful.

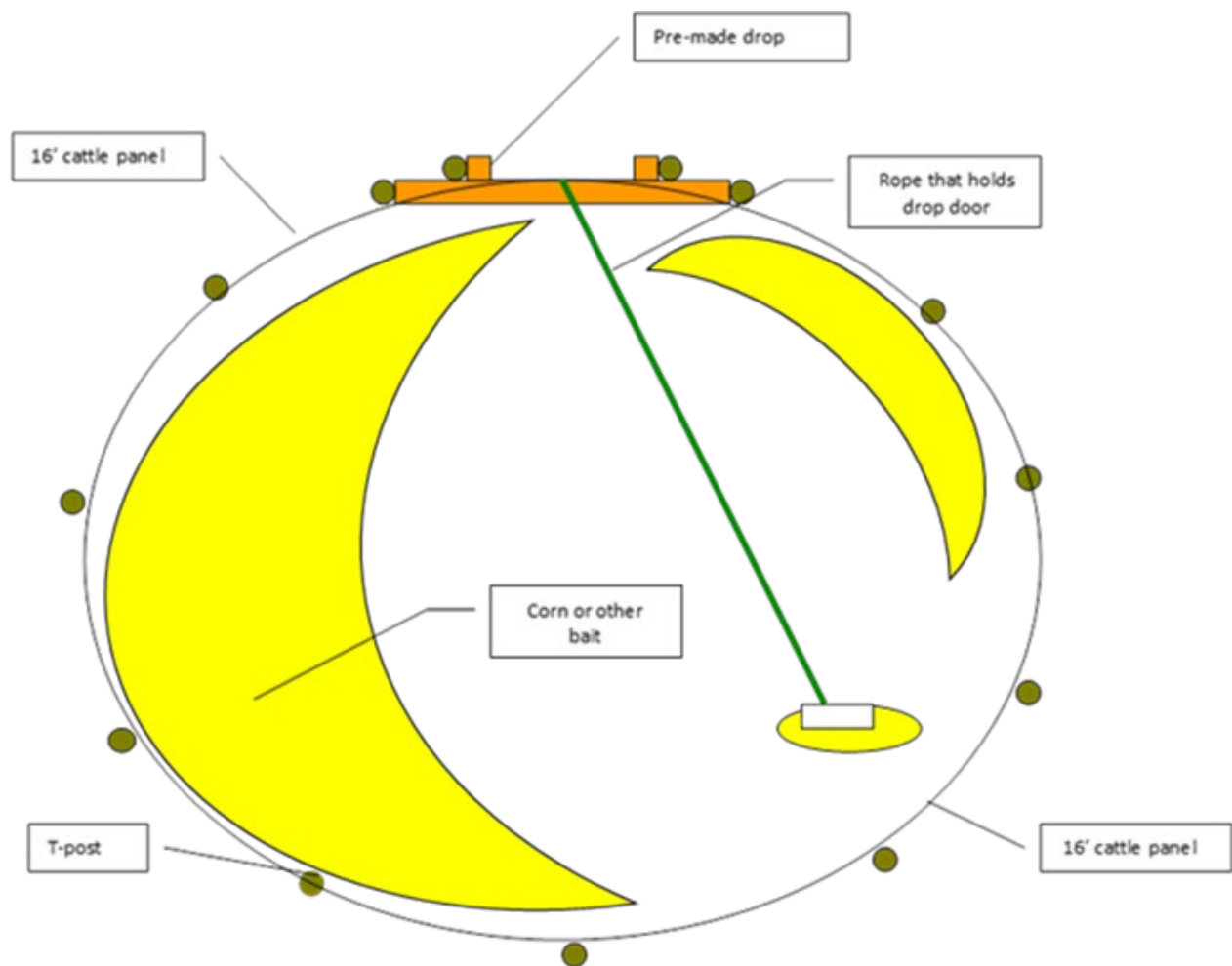
Conditioning and Trapping

Once the feral swine area has been identified, and the best area to build selected, it is important to consider several additional factors when choosing a trap site including:

1. Level ground,
2. Partial or full shaded area,
3. Easily accessible by vehicle or UTV.

After building or placing the trap, the next step is pre-baiting. Actual pre-baiting time will depend on whether the entire sounder is entering the trap. Be patient: this could take up to 2 weeks. During pre-baiting the gate will need to be wired or locked to stay open. This will allow the feral swine to get comfortable with coming into and leaving the trap area. Do not place the bait close to the trap entrance. Instead spread the bait near the back of the trap. The object is to allow as many feral swine to enter the trap as possible and give time for the trap door to close.

When using a pig triggered door, the baiting diagram herein should be followed to ensure that all feral swine are in the trap before the trigger is engaged. Additionally, during pre-baiting and trapping period, do NOT shoot at or otherwise harass pigs.



Baiting Diagram
 Courtesy of Dana Johnson, USDA-Wildlife Services

Monitoring

If the entire sounder was not trapped and dispatched or if other sounders are on adjacent land, the feral swine population will begin to grow again damaging land or crops. Therefore, it is important to monitor targeted locations for any sign of feral swine activity. Upon noticing any new activity repeat the removal steps.

Eligible Components

- Smart trap door and door frame
- Trigger Mechanism
- Steel T-post
- Pressure Treated Wood
- Screws/staples/bolts/U-bolts/nails
- Heavy Gauge wire panels
- Square or round metal tubing
- Game Camera with or without cellular data capability and service
- Solar panel
- Rechargeable battery
- Directional or omni-directional antenna
- Mounting or telescoping pole for antenna

Trap Material Details

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 2-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 warp and cause catch failures. If treated plywood is used, be sure to store the 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



Root Gate Trap Door

Photo courtesy of Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

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 like the door design used in constructing rabbit boxes. The swinging drop door design functions like 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.

Numerous door designs can be used. The simplest are falling door styles. They work well, but they are single catch only. No other pigs can enter the trap after they are tripped. The “root door” and the “saloon door” designs are both “continuous catch” designs. The smart door requires remote monitoring and engagement.

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



Drop Door

*Note cattle panels shown here do not meet specs. Horse panels or similar should be used.
Photo courtesy of Jason Harris, Clinton, LA*



Saloon Trap Door

Photo courtesy of Mike Harris, Alabama NRCS

Smart Doors

The smart door design consists of a metal door and triggering mechanism that is operated remotely using a mobile phone app and a game camera to monitor activity. The smart door (or gate) should be a minimum of 6' wide with 4"x2" welded, minimum 6-gauge steel material. The frame of the gate shall be tubular metal. The opening shall be minimum of 36" with an overall The smart trap door or gate shall have a control system that provides remote monitoring of the trap in rural areas.

The control system shall include a game camera to detect motion at the trap and shall provide video or photo notifications of activity inside the trap through a mobile

phone app. The control system shall provide operation of the gate through alternative methods or a mobile phone app. The camera shall be provided with a cellular data package for a minimum of one year. It is important to get a camera with cellular data service that works well in the location you plan to run the trap. The camera must be suitable for outdoor operation and provide video or still photos in low light conditions. The camera must provide a detection range of a minimum of 50' and a field of view of 40 degrees. The trigger speed for the camera must be a maximum of 1.2 seconds. Cellular components must be enterprise class and designated for long term use in extreme conditions. The antenna may be either a directional antenna in the case of poor or limited cell service or omnidirectional.

The antenna should have a minimum of 10' of cable to connect to the camera. The solar panel shall be a minimum of 120 W with charge controller to power the camera. The rechargeable battery shall have a 20-hour rating minimum with >200-minute reserve capacity. The camera, solar panel and antenna shall all easily mount to a single T-post.

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. 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 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.

Trap Camera, Antenna, Solar Panel and Battery

A trail or game camera can be helpful whether a smart door is employed or not and is eligible in either case. The camera may be provided with a cellular data package for a minimum of one year. It is important to get a camera with cellular data service that works well in the location you plan to run the trap.

The camera must be suitable for outdoor operation and provide video or still photos in low light conditions. The camera must provide a detection range of a minimum of 50' and a field of view of 40 degrees. If outfitted with cellular service, the cellular components must be enterprise class and designated for long term use in extreme conditions.

The antenna may be either a directional antenna in the case of poor or limited cell service or omnidirectional. The antenna should have a minimum of 10' of cable to connect to the camera.

The solar panel shall be a minimum of 120 W with charge controller to power the camera. The rechargeable battery shall have a 20-hour rating minimum with >200-minute reserve capacity. Non-rechargeable batteries shall be lithium-ion batteries.

The camera, solar panel and antenna shall all easily mount to a single T-post.

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 situation, such as distance, terrain, visibility, species being hunted, etc.

Traps should be checked daily. Trapped pigs should be euthanized immediately. It is illegal to move live feral swine (wild hogs, wild pigs, feral hogs) in Alabama. Contact your local Alabama Department of Conservation Law Enforcement Officer for details.

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. Burial is an effective way of disposal.

REFERENCES

A Landowner's Guide for Wild Pig Management: Practical Methods for Wild Pig Control. Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Publication ANR-1397. <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/wildlife/landowners-guide-wild-pig-management/>

Georgia Department of Natural Resources. <https://gadnr.org/feralhogs>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, <https://feralhogs.tamu.edu/>

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

Feral Hog Trapping 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 4 panels per trap with 16-foot panels

Maximum 4-inch by 2-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. 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.