Feral Swine Disease Risks to Cattle

Why should I worry about feral swine?

Feral swine destroy feed crops, damage fences, and contaminate water sources but their greatest threat to domestic cattle is disease transmission. Feral swine can carry many bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases of concern for cattle. Infection occurs through direct contact with feral swine that use pastures or feedlots with cattle. Transmission also occurs indirectly if feral swine are able to access feed and water sources utilized by cattle

Feral Swine Disease and Cattle Production

Many of the pathogens and parasites carried by feral swine can cause weight loss, abortions, infertility, or death in cattle. A positive test for some diseases, even without clinical symptoms, can require quarantine of cattle causing production losses, reduced access to markets, and can even require disposal of animal products. Some diseases, such as brucellosis, are caused by different strains of the same species of bacteria. Feral swine typically carry *Brucella suis*, this strain generally does not cause symptoms in cattle, however it can cause positive tests. Other strains of the *Brucella* bacteria will cause clinical illness in cattle.

Diseases of concern for cattle production

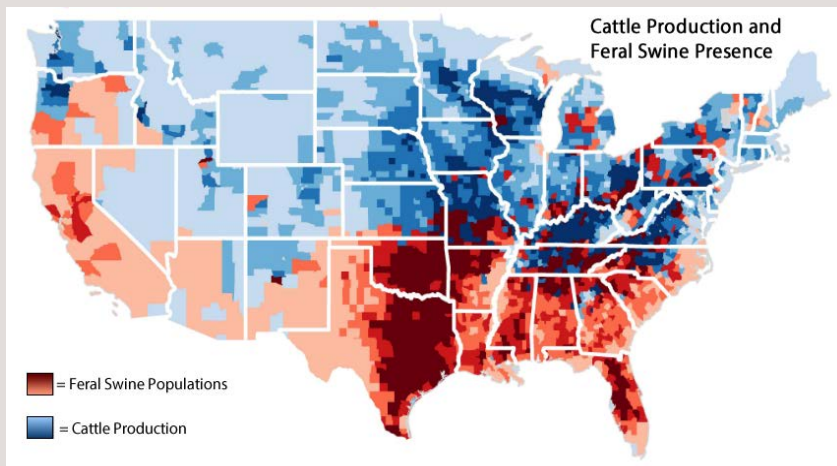| Disease	Routes of Transmission	Symptoms in Cattle
Brucellosis (*Brucella species* bacteria)	Direct contact with infected animals, aborted fetuses, afterbirth, or vaginal discharges. Ingestion of contaminated feed or water.	No clinical signs of *Brucella suis* infection, but can cause positive milk ring test (a routine test for dairy farms.) Other *Brucella* strains cause abortion and infertility.
Leptospirosis	Direct or indirect contact with infected urine.	Fever, anemia, lethargy, jaundice, abortion, and infertility.
Pathogenic *E. coli*	Ingestion of contaminated feces, food, or water.	Diarrhea, lethargy, loss of appetite, and fever; although most cattle show no signs of infection, transmission to humans is a public health risk.
Pseudorabies (Aujeszky's disease or "mad itch")	Nose-to-nose contact, contaminated water or feed, ingestion of infected tissues, aerosol, or contaminated equipment.	Intense itching, weakness, convulsions, rapid breathing, and death.
Salmonellosis	Ingestion of contaminated feces, food or water.	Severe watery, occasionally bloody, diarrhea, decreased milk production, dehydration, increased salivation, and fever.
Tuberculosis	Contact with infected animals, indirect contact with contaminated feed or water. Uncommon outside of Hawaii.	Loss of body condition (wasting), lethargy, fever, chronic cough, death.

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What is at risk?

The beef and dairy industries are invaluable; contributing more than $100 billion to the United States economy annually and feeding millions. With expanding feral swine populations overlapping with beef and dairy farms it becomes increasingly important to protect your livestock from exposure to feral swine disease risks. Disease introductions from feral swine could have a huge financial impact through losses in productivity, decreased product quality, as well as potentially detrimental impacts on trade.

How can I protect my cattle from becoming infected?

- Take additional precautions to prevent contact between feral swine and cattle if feral swine are found in your area. See the map to determine where feral swine currently exist.

- Store cattle feed in barns or prevent feral swine from accessing feed whenever possible.

- Prevent feral swine access to water sources used by cattle.

- Avoid feeding in troughs or on the ground, this can cause an increased risk of pathogen transmission since feral swine can access the feed easily.

Cattle Production and Feral Swine Presence

= Feral Swine Populations

= Cattle Production

Want to learn more?

Call Wildlife Services, a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, at 1-866-4-USDA-WS or visit www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/stopferalswine to learn more about the problems caused by this invasive animal, as well as to seek advice and assistance in dealing with feral swine.

**Manage the Damage
Stop Feral Swine**