a veterinarian to certify that they are free from pseudorabies. Before wild pigs are moved, they should be blood tested by a veterinarian to certify that they are free from disease.

Pigs are moved, they should be blood tested by a veterinarian to certify that they are free from disease.

1. Always wear disposable plastic or rubber gloves when field-dressing and butchering wild pigs. Cook wild pig meat thoroughly.

2. As soon as possible, wash hands with soap and hot water after dressing wild pigs.

3. Burn or bury gloves and remains from butchered wild pigs.

4. Fence out feral and wild pigs from areas with domestic swine.

1. Do not introduce wild pigs into herds or attempt to market pigs caught in the wild.

2. Before transporting breed ing swine, have blood tests performed according to State or Federal guidelines.

3. Blood test all new stock before adding them to herds in the United States. Because commercial-production swine are now free of pseudorabies, herds in the United States. Because commercial-production swine are now free of pseudorabies, pseudorabies and other potential diseases do not make their way into farm livestock and companion animals from infected feral pigs. The following Web sites are available for additional information about wild pigs:

   - Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study: http://www.suga.uga.edu
   - Texas Animal Health Commission: http://www.tahc.state.tx.us
   - Noble Foundation: http://www.noble.org

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Free-ranging populations of wild pigs (also called feral swine) exist in at least 39 States in this country. Some experts estimate their numbers at over 4 million, with the largest populations located in California, Florida, Hawaii, and Texas. Hunters, farmers, and landowners need to be aware of the extensive damage wild pigs can cause to their property and livestock. The rooting and wallowing activities of wild pigs cause serious erosion to river banks and areas along streams. These destructive animals have been known to tear through livestock and game fences and consume animal feed, minerals, and protein supplements. Not only do wild pigs feast on field crops such as corn, milo, rice, watermelon, peanuts, hay, turf and wheat, but they are also efficient predators and—when given the opportunity—will prey upon young livestock and other small animals.

In 1998, feral swine could be found in parts of all the counties shown here in green. By 2004, wild pigs had increased their range to counties shown in yellow, while remaining in the green-colored areas as well. Note that wild pigs are now found in two counties in Iowa—America’s #1 swine-producing State. Hunters, farmers, and landowners need to be aware of the extensive damage wild pigs can cause to their property and livestock. The rooting and wallowing activities of wild pigs can cause serious erosion to river banks and areas along streams. These destructive animals have been known to tear through livestock and game fences and consume animal feed, minerals, and protein supplements.

Figure 1—Wild pigs in the United States are referred to by many names, largely because of their mixed ancestry. Wild pigs are not native to the United States and should not be confused with the collared peccary (javelina) of the Southwest. Swine were first introduced to the United States in 1539, when Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto brought them to Florida. After that, it was common practice for settlers to allow their domestic swine to roam freely. Many years later, sport hunters introduced true Eurasian wild boars (Map adapted from originals created by the Southern Wildlife Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, Athens, GA.)

Figure 2—Wild pigs don’t all look alike. Some take after the Eurasian wild boar (top left); others (bottom left) look almost like domestic pigs. The javelina, or collared peccary (above) is native to the Southwestern United States. (Continued...)

Important Diseases
Wild pigs are susceptible to several serious swine diseases: swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, classical swine fever, and African swine fever. African swine fever—a major foreign animal disease—has never been found in the United States. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) eradicated classical swine fever (formerly known as hog cholera) from this country in 1976. Although swine brucellosis and pseudorabies have been eliminated from U.S. commercial production swine herds, hunters and farmers need to be aware that wild pigs may be infected with these diseases and can readily transmit them to domestic pigs. Moving untested wild pigs to new areas or allowing them onto farms that have domestic pigs is illegal and can have disastrous consequences.

Swine Brucellosis
Swine brucellosis is caused by bacteria very similar to the organism that causes brucellosis in cattle, and both diseases are a public health concern. Swine brucellosis causes abortions in sows and infertility in boars. Although this disease does not kill pigs outright, it causes losses in reproduction that decrease profits for swine producers. The swine brucellosis organism is transmitted in reproductive discharges, particularly the afterbirth, from infected sows or in semen from infected boars. Infected swine are disease carriers for life, and there is no effective treatment. Detecting infected swine through blood tests and culling animals is the only way to remove the disease from the herd.

Swine brucellosis has been reported in wild pig populations in at least 14 States based primarily on serological prevalence. The disease can be spread to domestic swine if wild pigs are introduced into local herds. Introduction could be intentional, or wild pigs could break into pastures or pens to breed with domestic sows. Pigs infected with swine brucellosis can serve as a source of infection to domestic animals. Cattle can also become infected if they come in close contact with infected wild pigs. Humans can get swine brucellosis through handling infected tissues of wild pigs. Hunters are...