

Taboo the **Toxins** **or** **Poison** the **Pigs?**



STATE QUALIFYING EVENT: DEC. 1-2, 2017
MADISONVILLE FFA CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 879
MADISONVILLE, TEXAS 77864
(936) 349-8002



ISSUE SUMMARY

1. List course(s) in which instruction occurred.

- Wildlife, Fisheries, and Ecology Management (49 students) – identified hunting regulations for game and non-game species and specific laws related to depredating species. A timeline was completed following the evolution of environmental law. We explored state and federal agencies related to wildlife management and the role each plays in enforcing environmental regulations.
- Livestock Production (26 students) – compared the physiology, nutritional needs, and food preferences of various animal species, learning the function of each body system and the typical behavioral patterns of livestock. We also completed a unit on diseases and parasites of domestic livestock and vectors of these diseases.
- Small Animal Science (38 students) – discussed potential risks to the well-being of pets, including the risk of and first aid for poisoning.
- Principles of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (74 students) – studied the process of bills becoming law and the organizational structure of our state and national government, emphasizing duties and actions of state and federal agencies who oversee the safety of meat products and the registration and use of pesticides.
- Professional Communications (37 students) – practiced professional interviewing etiquette and developed oral presentation and written communication skills.
- Business Information Management (14 students) – covered online research techniques, source credibility, and the use of Microsoft PowerPoint® software.

2. What is the nature of the issue and why is this issue important now?

The population of feral hogs in the United States has continued to climb. An estimated six million feral hogs now impact thirty-nine states (Selby, 2018). Texas leads the nation in the number of feral pigs with 30 to 50% of the total count (Selby, 2018). Current estimates place the statewide population at 2.6 million, an all-time high. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, n.d.). These animals have become increasingly hard to control as they have few natural predators, adapt readily to a variety of conditions, have become wise to various trapping and hunting methods, and can reproduce at a very fast rate (Morthland, 2011). Feral hogs are responsible for \$52 million in statewide crop losses each year, with each pig causing an estimated \$200 in damage annually (Burns, 2017). In order to mitigate this damage, researchers have worked over the last decade to create a pig pesticide - a toxin to reduce the feral pig population (Tompkins, 2017). In January 2017, a product called Kaput®, with the active ingredient of warfarin, became the first toxicant to gain authorization to be used in the United States for feral hog control (Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). In February, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announced that Texas would allow this product to be sold as a limited-use pesticide and rolled out a plan for Kaput to be sold starting May 2017 (Texas Department of Agriculture, 2017). Opponents however, acted quickly to stop this from taking place. A lawsuit was filed by the Texas Hog Hunters Association and Wild Boar Meat Company (Brezosky, 2017). In April, the owners of Sciometrics, the company that makes Kaput, released a statement withdrawing their petition for registration in Texas, stating they could not afford a lengthy legal battle (Sciometrics, 2017). The story of Kaput however, reflects an issue that is greater than the gain or loss of one product. Sciometrics and other manufacturers have invested significant resources in the development of feral hog baits. Many types of baits are currently in the research phase. It is only a matter of time before Sciometrics or another company will again seek approval for a toxic bait to be used on feral pigs in Texas (McAdams, 2017). This issue is unfolding before our eyes (Copeland, 2017) as elected officials, state employees, and citizens must soon decide whether Texas will accept poison as a means of controlling feral hogs. Decisions made now on this issue will, without question, directly impact the environment, Texas' agricultural industry, and taxpayers and landowners.

3. Who is involved in the issue?

Rural property owners are on the frontlines of this battle as feral hogs most often damage agricultural land and can spread diseases to domestic livestock (Mapston, n.d.). Residents who live in suburban and urban areas however, are also becoming involved as feral hogs are starting to cause more damage to yards, landscapes, airports, and golf courses (Austin, 2018). The Texas Department of Agriculture is at the heart of this issue in Texas, as the state agency responsible for pesticide registration and regulation (Nolan, personal communication, 2017). The Texas Legislature could also influence this issue by passing legislation accepting, rejecting, or placing parameters on the types of pesticides that can be adopted for use (Texas Legislature Online, 2017). Individuals who gain products or revenue from feral hogs such as hunters, game ranch managers, guides, ammunition manufacturers, and companies that sell meat from feral hogs will be affected as pig population levels influence their income (Smith, 2017). Texas taxpayers need to stay abreast of decisions as the state currently spends 450 thousand dollars of tax money on hog control each year (Higgenbotham, personal communication, 2017). Finally, the ultimate decision on this issue will impact consumers of wild game and any who interact with nature if cross-contamination from pig poisons alters the environment (Wild Boar Meat Company, 2017).

4. How can the issue be defined?

This forum falls primarily under the topic areas of “Environmental Issues” and “Policy Issues” as listed in the *Focusing on Agricultural Issues* instructional materials (The Council for Agricultural Education, n.d.). As pesticide regulation is a power belonging to state governments, we elected to define this controversy in our forum by asking: Should we

legalize the use of poison for the eradication of feral hogs in Texas (Sidder, 2017)? This simple question has spurred a flurry of public opinions on both sides (Selk, 2017). Those who support the use of poison argue that feral hog damage has become so extensive that any means of control is justified (Sikes, 2017). They are quick to point out the success Australia has had with feral hog toxins (Texas Department of Agriculture, 2017) and emphasize that current control methods in the United States are only removing 30 percent of the pig population annually, when 70 percent would need to be eradicated just to keep the population from continuing to rise (McAdams, 2016). However, opponents believe that introducing toxins into our ecosystem is dangerous. They fear non-target species will be heavily compromised and that the spread of poison will be difficult to contain once unleashed (Wild Boar Meat Company, 2017). They feel the presence of poisons will deter Texans from eating and selling meat from wild game and they look to alternative control methods such as sterilization, fencing, helicopter hunting, hunting incentives, and improved trapping to control these pests (Leeper, 2018). Unlike some issues that pit rural citizens versus urban dwellers, our forums clearly revealed proponents and opponents are often next door neighbors. This controversy is raging in Texas, and many states are watching to see if Texas decides to taboo the toxins or poison the pigs (Hawkes III, 2017).

5. What is the historical background of the issue and what caused it?

A combination of factors led to the rapid expansion of feral hogs and the resulting consideration of using toxic baits on these animals. Significant dates relevant to this discussion on the merits of eliminating pigs with poisonous baits are:

- 1539 – Hernando DeSoto brings the first pigs into what would become Florida. His original herd of 13 pigs grows to over 700 in just three years (Texas Pork Producers, 2017). Escaped animals from his herd become the first feral pigs in the continental United States.
- 1700's – European settlers coming to the new world bring pigs to provide meat and lard (Taylor, n.d.).
- 1836 – The fall of the Alamo touches off the Runaway Scrape. As Texans flee from the advancing army of Santa Anna, many pigs are left behind to survive in the wild (Taylor, n.d.).
- 1912-1930 – Russian boars are brought to the United States to provide exotic hunts. Some are placed in poorly fenced areas, allowing them to escape and contribute to the growing feral pig population (Taylor, n.d.).
- July 1, 1994 – Australia approves the use of warfarin for the removal of feral hogs. Australia will later also approve the use of sodium nitrite and sodium fluoroacetate (Department of Primary Industries, n.d.).
- January 3, 2017 – The Environmental Protection Agency grants a registration number to Kaput Feral Hog Lure, a warfarin based pesticide. Kaput becomes the first feral hog toxin to be approved for use in the United States of America (Environmental Protection Agency, 2017).
- February 21, 2017 – Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announces that Kaput will be allowed to be sold and utilized in Texas as a limited-use pesticide (Texas Department of Agriculture, 2017).
- February 25, 2017 – Wild Boar Meat Company and the Texas Hog Hunters Association file a law suit against Sciometrics, the manufacturer of Kaput (Wild Boar Meat Company, 2017).
- March 1, 2017 – Travis County Judge Jan Soifer orders a temporary restraining order, halting progress on distributing Kaput to retail outlets for ninety days (Leschper, 2017).
- March 8, 2017 – Representative Lynn Stucky files House Bill 3451. This bill passes by a vote of 127 to 12 in the Texas House of Representatives but is left pending in committee in the State Senate. This legislation would have required all pesticides be tested in Texas by a state agency before being approved for use in the Lone Star State (Texas Legislature Online, 2017).
- April 24, 2017 – The owners of Sciometrics Ltd. Corporation withdraw their petition for the registration of Kaput in Texas saying the company “cannot sustain a lengthy legal battle” (Sciometrics, 2017).
- January 2018 – The United States Department of Agriculture grants clearance for field testing sodium nitrite baits in non-fenced environments in Texas and Alabama (McConnaughey, 2017).

6. What are the risks?

Opponents of using toxic baits on feral hogs in Texas:

- Believe that poisons will undercut the revenue feral hogs bring to the state.
- Argue that the use of poisons is inhumane.
- Maintain that non-targeted wildlife will be harmed.
- Allege that Texas' 14 billion dollar hunting industry will be compromised because of the fear of tainted meat.
- Encourage the use of alternative strategies such as trapping, fencing, high-tech hunting, and sterilization.

7. What are the benefits?

Supporters of utilizing toxic baits for feral pig removal:

- Affirm that feral hogs cause significant damage to our state's crops, soils, and waterways.
- Emphasize that the use of poison has brought significant success in controlling feral hogs in Australia.
- Stress that all baits must go through rigorous testing before being approved.
- Insist that non-target species are more at risk if the pigs are not controlled.
- Predict that without poisons the feral pig population will continue to rise.



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Additional Assistance

Portfolio Layout -Yvonne Morgan, Retired Art Teacher
Bibliography Page – Christy Whitten, English Teacher



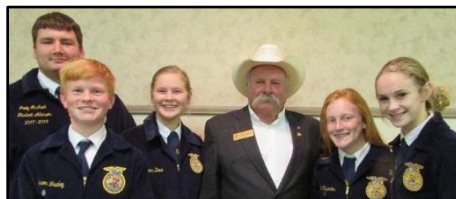
LOCAL FORUM PRESENTATIONS

When	Where	To Whom	# Present
September 21, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madison County Farm Bureau	101
September 26, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative	10
September 28, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Headquarters	14
October 2, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Bedias Creek Soil & Water Conservation District	9
October 9, 2017	Madisonville, TX	KMVL Radio	2 + Listeners
October 10, 2017	Waco, TX	Texas Farm Bureau State Staff	14
October 10, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville CISD School Board	25
October 10, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Mayor Bill Parten and Madisonville City Council	13
October 17, 2017	Austin, TX	Texas Public Policy Foundation	15
October 17, 2017	Austin, TX	Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Assoc.	3
October 17, 2017	Austin, TX	Staff of Representative Lynn Stucky	1
October 17, 2017	Austin, TX	Staff of Representative Mark Keough	1
October 17, 2017	Austin, TX	Texas Department of Agriculture	5
November 2, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville Noon Lions Club	10
November 3, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Daughters of the Republic of Texas	15
November 6, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville FFA Open House	47
November 13, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority	7
November 15, 2017	Madisonville, TX	Madison County Beef and Forage Committee	8
November 16, 2017	Temple, TX	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	41
December 1-2, 2017	Huntsville, TX	State FFA Contest	60
January 10, 2018	Austin, TX	Texas Animal Health Commission (October appointment postponed by Hurricane Harvey)	8
January 10, 2018	Hunt, TX	Mr. Justin Foster and Mr. Josh Coward	2

Madison County Farm Bureau Banquet
September 21, 2017 – Kimbro Community Center, 6:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 101



We were glad to speak to a room full of local farmers and ranchers. Mayor Bill Parten and Farm Bureau State Director from District 9, Larry Joiner were present.



Dear Judges of the FFA Ag Issues Event,

Compliments are in order for the Madisonville FFA Chapter's performance at the Madison County Farm Bureau Banquet held September 21, 2017 at the Kimbro Center in downtown Madisonville. The 101 people who heard this presentation could tell much study went into the development of this topic. The members left better informed on this controversial issue.

Larry Joiner *Larry Joiner*
District 9 Board Member, Texas Farm Bureau

RUSSELL W. BOENING
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RONNIE HUENINK
Hondo
BOB REED
Bay City
ZACHARY K. YANTA
Runge
SCOTT FRAZIER
Chapman Ranch

Leslie Young *Leslie Young*
Madison County, Office Manager

Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative
September 26, 2017 – Woodbine Hotel, 12:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 10



MARI is a group focused on the Economic Development of Madisonville. They asked several questions about the financial impact feral hogs have on Texas Agriculture.



MARI

MADISONVILLE AREA REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

P.O. BOX 229 • MADISONVILLE, TX 77864 • (936)348-2132

On September 26, 2017 at noon, 10 members of the Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative were happy to host the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team at the Woodbine Hotel in Madisonville. We learned about the potential use of poison to eliminate feral hogs in Texas. All left the meeting well-informed about this issue. The Madisonville FFA is invited to any future meetings as we are always blessed by their presence.

Sharon Phelps
 MARI Chair

Sharon Phelps
 MARI Chair

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Headquarters Panel
September 28, 2017 – AgriLife Extension Building, 4:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 14



This was an excellent group to meet with early in this process as they provided information and connections to other key individuals involved with this issue.



TEXAS A&M
 AGRILIFE
 EXTENSION

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 1470 William D. Fitch Parkway
 College Station, TX 77845
 Phone: 979.845.4865

Subject: FFA Agricultural Issues Presentation – 14 Present
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – September 28, 2017, 4:00 P.M.

Thank you for allowing us to hear your presentation on the logistics of using poisonous baits to control feral hogs. The team was well informed and spoke with passion. It was great to see young people accept the challenge of understanding a topic even professionals find hard to decipher. We were glad to provide feedback and resources for your team.

Denise Harmel-Garza
 Program Coordinator

Denise Harmel-Garza

Bedias Creek Soil and Water Conservation District
October 2, 2017 – Madisonville City Hall, 9:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 9



This board works directly with ranchers to establish conservation practices. Three specialists with the Natural Resource Conservation Service were present.



BEDIAS CREEK
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT #428
 120 South Elm, Suite #110, Madisonville, Texas 77864 (936) 348-2173
 Post Office Box 217, Centerville, Texas 75833 (903) 536-2940

The **Bedias Creek Soil & Water Conservation District** would like to thank you for your presentation titled **"Taboo the toxins or poison the pigs?"** on Monday, October 2, 2017 at the Madisonville City Hall at 9:00 A.M. The team was very well researched in each point of view; well-articulated in their expression of those points and gave a wonderfully informative presentation. The nine individuals present were honored to hear the presentation and provide feedback.

Charlie Price, Chairman

Charlie Price

KMVL Radio
October 9, 2017 – KMVL Studio, 8:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 2 + Listeners



KMVL FM broadcasts on 13,000 watts, extending in a 70 mile radius into parts of twelve counties. The AM station covers Walker, Grimes, and Madison counties.



102 West Main Street
 Madisonville, Texas 77864

(936) 348-9200
 FAX: (936) 348-9201

This letter is documentation that Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team members were guests on KMVL's morning show from 8:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. on Monday, October 9, 2017. They participated in a live broadcast with morning show hosts, Bill Cavill and Dawn Knight. The students provided information and answered caller questions on the control of feral hogs. The morning show broadcasts on both our AM and FM stations, and can be heard in 13 towns in the listening area.

Paul Wright, Station Manager

Paul Wright

Texas Farm Bureau
October 10, 2017 – Texas FB Headquarters, Waco, 9:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 14



We traveled to Waco to meet with a panel from the State Farm Bureau office. The Farm Bureau supports the use of toxins and was involved in state hearings.



TEXAS
FARM
BUREAU

RUSSELL W. BOERING
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DAN B. SMITH
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MARK R. CHAMBLEE
Tyler
VAL STEPHENS
Lamesa
JESSICA RICHMOND
De Leon

LARRY W. JOINER
Huntington
RONNIE MUENKING
Hondo
BOB REED
Bay City

ZACHARY K. YANTA
Ranger
SCOTT FRAZIER
Chapman Ranch

Dear Ag Issues Forum Judges:

On behalf of the Texas Farm Bureau staff present, I would like to say it was a pleasure to visit with the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team on 10-10-17 at 9:30 A.M. at the state office in Waco. The students did an excellent job addressing both sides of the issue on feral hog control. This topic is at the forefront of agricultural issues. The 14 present enjoyed the presentation and were impressed with the answers provided to our questions. Good luck to the team!

Whit H. Weems, Ed.D
 Director of Leadership Development

Madisonville CISD School Board
October 10, 2017 – MCISD Central Office, 5:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 25



The Board of Trustees was very helpful in their feedback. They wanted to know how much the baits would cost and how they would be fed.



To the esteemed judges of the Ag Issues FFA Competition:

It was my privilege to listen to the MHS FFA Ag Issues Team on October 10, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at the Madisonville CISD Central Office. During the program, I listened to the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team discuss feral hogs in Texas and the potential use of toxins to control this invasive animal. The team showed advanced understanding of the issue. Particularly impressive was the team's ability to handle the multitude of questions presented to them. The discussion truly made an impression on the twenty-five individuals present. MCISD is proud of this team and wishes them well in future competitions.

Keith W. Smith
 Superintendent

P.O. Box 879 • Madisonville, Texas 77864 • Phone (936) 348-2797 • Fax (936) 348-2751



Madisonville City Council
October 10, 2017 – Madisonville City Hall, 7:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 13



We were pleased to visit with our mayor and city council. They had great questions about the impact of feral hogs on suburban areas and landowners' rights.



City of Madisonville

210 West Cottonwood • MADISONVILLE, TEXAS 77864
 Phone (936) 348-2748 • FAX (936) 348-3815

To the Judges of the Ag Issues Contest:

On behalf of the City of Madisonville and the City Council, I would like to certify that we listened to the Madisonville High School Ag Issues Team on October 10, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. Thirteen council members and guests were present for the presentation. The students did an excellent job highlighting opposing viewpoints on legalizing toxins for feral hogs. Madison County residents will be watching this issue with great interest as feral hogs significantly impact this county.

Bill Parten, Mayor

Texas Public Policy Foundation
October 17, 2017 – Texas Public Policy Office, 9:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 15



This organization provides research to political agencies and leaders. They challenged us to further research the feasibility of various control options.



901 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701



(512) 472-2700 phone
(512) 472-2728 fax
info@texaspolicy.com

To the Judges of the FFA Agricultural Issues Forum Contest:

It was our pleasure to host the Madisonville FFA team on 10-17-17 at our office on Congress Avenue in Austin at 9:00 a.m. As a professional research organization, we appreciate the development of tomorrow's leaders. The 15 individuals present thoroughly enjoyed the forum on the potential use of toxins for feral hogs and enjoyed the discussion following the presentation. The students were well-versed in the material and it was a pleasure to interact with these bright young Texans.

Most respectfully,

Jaimie Ailshire – Office Manager

Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
October 17, 2017 – TSCRA Office - Austin, 10:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 3



TSCRA was an excellent venue to discuss landowners' varied views on this topic and to also gain some insight about HB 3451.



Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

1301 W. SEVENTH ST. • SUITE 201 • FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-2665
817-332-7064 • 800-242-7820 • F:817-332-6441 • WWW.TSCRA.ORG

Dear Judges,

I am writing to confirm that the Madisonville FFA Agricultural Issues Team gave a presentation on the use of poisons for feral hogs to representatives of Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA). The presentation was held on October 17, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. at the TSCRA office conference room, with three staff members in attendance. The Madisonville FFA Team did a phenomenal job presenting the opposing viewpoints and capturing perspectives of rural landowners. Our office will be monitoring this issue closely, as this topic will undoubtedly influence our members and all agricultural producers in Texas.

Respectfully,

Kaleb McLaurin – Director of Government Affairs, TSCRA

Worth Farabee, Staff of Representative Lynn Stucky
October 17, 2017 – Texas State Capitol, 12:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 1



Rep. Lynn Stucky was the author of HB 3451 and is a major opponent of using warfarin. As a veterinarian, Dr. Stucky is vocal about the pain warfarin can induce.



My office was proud to host members of the Madisonville FFA Chapter on Tuesday October 17, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. to discuss HB 3451 and how Texas will address the problem of feral hogs from this time forward. We always welcome the opportunity to meet with young Texans who are interested in the issues facing our state.

Sincerely,

Lynn Stucky, DVM
State Representative, District 64

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Ruth Mesta, Staff of Representative Mark Keough
October 17, 2017 – Texas State Capitol, 1:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 1



Rep. Keough was the author of HB 3535, authorizing a new hunting method for feral hogs in Texas. This bill passed and became law on September 1, 2017.



TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



MARK J. KEOUGH
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE
 District 15

On October 17th, 2017, I had the honor of meeting Ms. Foster's FFA students at the capitol building in Austin. During our 1:30 p.m. appointment, the students discussed feral hogs in Texas. We specifically chatted about House Bill 3535, a bill that Representative Keough passed during the 85th Legislative Session to help control the rapidly expanding pig population.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me either by e-mail or by phone at Ruth.Mesta@House.Texas.Gov or (512) 463-0797.

Ruth Mesta
 Legislative Director

Ruth Mesta

Texas Department of Agriculture
October 17, 2017 – TDA Office, Austin, 4:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 5



We met with TDA Program Specialist, Ilissa Nolan and members of the TDA staff who have been testifying in legislative hearings regarding the use of Kaput.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Dear Judges of the Ag Issues FFA Competition:

Madisonville FFA students delivered an outstanding presentation to five staff members of the Texas Department of Agriculture on October 17, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. Ms. Nolan reported that significant time has obviously been invested. Their dedication to inform the public about key issues within the agricultural industry is commendable. We encourage them to keep up the great work as future leaders of Texas.

Sincerely,
 Sid Miller

P.O. BOX 12847
 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

Sid Miller

TEXASAGRICULTURE.GOV

(512) 463-7476
 FAX: (888) 223-8861

Madisonville Noon Lions Club
November 2, 2017 – Woodbine Hotel, 12:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 10



The Lions Club was glad to host our team. We discussed the research being conducted on sodium nitrite and sterilization baits.



Dear FFA Ag Issues Contest Judges:

On November 2, 2017, the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team presented to the Madisonville Noon Lions Club at 12:00 p.m. at the Woodbine Hotel. There were 10 Lions Club members present. The presentation titled, "Should we taboo the toxins or poison the pigs?" sparked a lively discussion on how to best control these animals. We always enjoy having Madisonville FFA students as our guest presenters.

Tammy Hoke
 Treasurer, Madisonville Noon Lions Club

Tammy Hoke

Daughters of the Republic of Texas
November 3, 2017 – Madison County Museum, 10:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 15



These ladies are civically minded and asked how land owners could support research efforts for the best possible solution to the feral pig problem.



On behalf of the Rev. John Haynie Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, we thank the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team for presenting the program on Thursday, November 3, 2017 at 10:00 A.M. at the Madison County Museum Stephen F. Austin birthday celebration. There were 15 persons in attendance who became better informed on the topic of feral hogs, an issue Madison County residents regularly contend with. The students were very professional, friendly, and interacted well with our audience.

Masie Temme, President

Madisonville FFA Community Open House
November 6, 2017 – MHS Ag Building, 6:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 47



The attendees asked 25 minutes of questions. They were very interested to know the next steps of the process and how they could have input on this issue.



Dear Judges of the FFA Ag Issues Contest:

I had the privilege of listening to the Ag Issues team present a spirited discussion on feral hogs and how we can best work to control these animals. This occurred at the Madisonville FFA Community Open House held at the MHS Ag Building on 11-6-17 at 6:00 p.m. The presentation was engaging and the students' ability to answer questions from the 47 in attendance was impressive. I believe this FFA program is an excellent way to help our youth understand important issues facing our future. I extend congratulations on a job well done.

Shelli Shephard

Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority
November 13, 2017 – MHS Library, 4:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 7



The ladies of the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority had some excellent questions regarding non-toxic means of control and the use of toxicants in Australia.



ALPHA DELTA KAPPA



The Texas Epsilon Gamma Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa was most pleased to host the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team at 4:30 p.m. on November 13th at our meeting in the Madisonville High School Library. The seven individuals present were blessed with an informative program regarding the management of feral hogs and the mitigation of damage to landowners. We were glad to hear this presentation and the responses to our questions on this topic.

Dena Abernathy

Madison County Beef and Forage Committee
November 15, 2017 – County Extension Office, 9:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 8



The Beef and Forage Committee meeting provided us another chance to meet with local agricultural producers. This group was anxious to use any method to control hogs.



Madison County 4-H
 300 School Street · Madisonville, TX 77864



To the Judges of the Ag Issues FFA Contest:

The Madison County Beef and Forage Committee was pleased to listen to the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team on November 15, 2017 at 9:00 A.M. The meeting was held at County Extension Office in Madisonville. An audience of eight, including committee members and guests, asked multiple questions, resulting in a discussion on feral hog control which was stimulating and insightful.

Chadd Caperton

County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
November 16, 2017 – TSSWCB Office, 8:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 41



The TSSWCB consists of 5 members elected from districts and 2 governor appointees. The TSSWCB helps landowners receive funds to recover from hog damage.



José Dodier, Jr., *Chairman*
 Barry Mahler, *Vice Chairman*
 Scott Buckles, *Member*
 Marty H. Graham, *Member*

Jerry D. Nichols, *Member*
 Tina Y. Buford, *Member*
 Carl Ray Polk, Jr., *Member*
 Rex Isom, *Executive Director*

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources for Tomorrow

Dear Judges,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the Madisonville FFA Agricultural Issues team taking the time to present to our staff, board members, and guests on November 16, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. The forty-one individuals in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the presentation on feral hog control. Many of the points made align with our agency's goals and efforts. We wish this team the best of luck in future endeavors!

Rex Isom
 Executive Director

Texas Animal Health Commission
Rescheduled to January 10, 2018 – TAHC Office, 8:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 8



Hurricane Harvey led to TAHC rescheduling our October meeting as they handled rescued animals. In January, we finally got the chance to visit about swine diseases.



TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Coleman H. Locke
Chairman

Andy Schwartz, D.V.M.
Executive Director

Judges of the Agricultural Issues Forum,

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was pleased to welcome the Madisonville High School Ag Issues team to our office on January 10, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. The FFA students gave an excellent presentation on feral swine to the eight staff members present. The presentation was originally scheduled for October 17, 2017, but when Hurricane Harvey made landfall the TAHC was called into service under the State Emergency Management Plan. We regret not being able to host the students as originally scheduled and appreciate their understanding in meeting with us at a later date.

Callie Ward
 TAHC Public Information Officer
 callie.ward@tahc.texas.gov

Mr. Justin Foster and Mr. Josh Coward
January 10, 2018 – Kerr Wildlife Management Area, 1:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 2



The distance of five hours each way made this visit only possible on a school break. This is the facility where trials of sodium nitrite bait are being conducted.



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Dick Scott
 Wimberey

Kelcy L. Warren
 Dallas

Lee M. Bass
 Chairman-Emeritus
 Fort Worth

Carter P. Smith
 Executive Director

My associate, Mr. Josh Coward and I were glad to host students from the Madisonville FFA Chapter on January 10, 2018 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area in Hunt, TX. After their excellent presentation, we spent several hours covering the biology, ecology, and behaviors of feral hogs. As we toured the management area, we discussed the ongoing research on sodium nitrite baits and delivery systems being conducted at our facility. It was evident that these students are committed to learning and representing the facts accurately. We wish them well in their FFA competitive event.

Justin Foster
 Research Coordinator
 Texas Parks and Wildlife, Region II