



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

April 11, 2013

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

Wildlife Services

Washington, DC

Dear Tribal Leader:

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) values our partnerships with Tribal Nations. Therefore, we are providing information to tribal leaders about the start of a national programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess alternatives for reducing damage and risks to human health and safety from feral swine in the United States and Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. The overall objective of the project is to minimize damage inflicted by feral swine in a manner consistent with state, Tribal and territory management objectives for the species. We want to make certain that tribal values and concerns regarding the management of feral swine are included in the EIS and subsequent management plan.

Feral swine are a harmful and destructive non-native invasive species. Their geographic range is rapidly expanding and their populations are increasing exponentially across the United States. The population is currently estimated to exceed more than five million animals in 40 percent of all counties in the United States, and in 38 states including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. This is an increase from the 1982 estimate of only a few counties in 17 states. Feral swine also occur in Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands. Feral swine can inflict significant damages to numerous resources including physical damage to crops and property; predation on livestock; disease transmission threats to livestock, humans and wildlife; and pose other threats to human health and safety (e.g., vehicle collisions and aggressive swine). Feral swine also damage natural resources including sensitive habitats and endangered species.

Feral swine have positive values for some individuals. In areas where feral swine populations are well established, feral swine hunting provides recreational, cultural and economic benefits. Businesses have developed to provide hunting opportunities and help landowners manage damage by feral swine. For some families, feral swine can be a supplemental food source.

The Tribes, States, and Territories have management authority for feral swine. Executive Order 13112 of February 3, 1999, directs Federal agencies to use their programs and authorities to prevent the spread or to control populations of invasive species that cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. The APHIS, Wildlife Services (WS) program is authorized to work with other federal

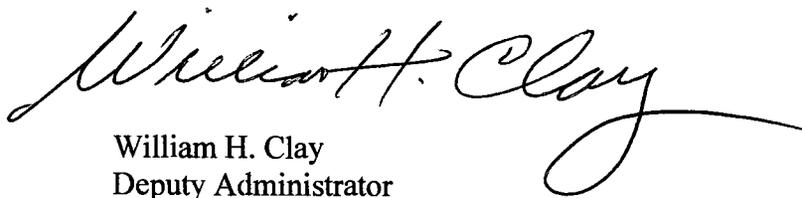
*Safeguarding American Agriculture*

APHIS is an agency of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

agencies, Tribes, States, Territories, local government, and private individuals and organizations to protect American resources from damage associated with wildlife (the Act of March 2, 1931 (46 Stat. 1468; 7 U.S.C. 426-426b) as amended, and the Act of December 22, 1987, (101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 U.S.C. 426c)). APHIS, WS has been working with state, federal and local agencies, tribes and private individuals on a local level to address feral swine damage, and will be the lead agency in the preparation of the EIS to review options for a national feral swine management program. The APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS) program will be participating in the development of the EIS. APHIS, VS works in a variety of ways to protect and improve the health, quality, and marketability of U.S. animals (including some captive wildlife species), animal products, and veterinary biologics by (1) preventing, controlling, and/or eliminating animal diseases and (2) monitoring and promoting animal health and productivity. The authority for the mission of VS is found in the Animal Health Protection Act (7 United States Code (U.S.C.) 8301 et seq.).

We have scheduled a Tribal Nations conference call for May 16, 2013, at 3:00 PM Eastern Time to provide additional information on this issue and answer any questions you may have. APHIS would also like to offer you an opportunity for consultation regarding the proposed feral swine program. If you are interested in participating in the call and/or initiating consultation on this issue, I ask that you inform us of your interest by May 10, 2013. My point of contact for this project is Dr. Dale Nolte, Feral Swine Program Manager, (970) 266-6049, [dale.l.nolte@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:dale.l.nolte@aphis.usda.gov). I look forward to your response and the opportunity to work with you on this important program.

Sincerely,



William H. Clay  
Deputy Administrator