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## **NRCS Announces \$89,000 Available to Assist Landowners Eradicate Feral/Wild Swine in Targeted Counties**

**Auburn, Alabama, Mar. 15, 2010** - Feral/wild swine population is growing at an alarming rate in Alabama. The monetary losses can be extensive. They destroy native plants and habitats, create erosion problems, degrade water quality and compete with native wildlife for food. In addition, they can cause massive crop damage, transmit diseases to domestic livestock, and adversely affect timber production through destruction of seedlings and young trees.

Feral swine have been sighted in most of the 67 counties in Alabama and can reproduce at an alarming rate. Sows can begin breeding at 6 months of age, and produce up to 4 litters per year with each litter consisting of 4 to 12 piglets.

Alabama landowners will have an opportunity to receive financial assistance through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) to trap and properly dispose of feral/wild swine. Applications are being accepted through March 24, 2010, in the following counties: Baldwin, Covington, Coffee, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Lowndes, Macon, Mobile, and Wilcox. While this is a continuous signup, applications for 2010 funding must be received by the cut-off date.

Traps will be limited to two per landowner. Reimbursement will be as follows:

\$500 for each trap installed to NRCS specifications

Socially disadvantaged, beginning, and limited resource farmers and ranchers will receive a higher reimbursed rate of \$600 per trap installed to NRCS specifications.

Assistant State Conservationist Steve Musser said “This program concern is the result of a coordinated effort between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Alabama Department of Conservation and Fresh Water Fisheries, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Alabama Wildlife Federation and Wildlife Service’s of USDA. This group has worked to identify a serious problem and to provide practical solutions to landowners.”

Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. Individuals are not eligible for WHIP until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements. Contact your local NRCS or Farm Service Agency Office to begin this process. NRCS field offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture or on-line at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

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