

## **Brucellosis in Feral/Wild Pigs**

Hunters of wild hogs in South Carolina run the risk of exposure to a disease called Brucellosis. Hunters can catch the disease when they dress and slaughter wild pigs and should take the following precautions:

- wear disposable plastic or rubber gloves and eye protection when dressing and cleaning wild pigs
- avoid direct contact with blood and reproductive organs
- as soon as possible, wash your hands with soap and hot water
- burn or bury gloves and the remains from dressed wild pigs
- cook meat from wild pigs thoroughly

Wild hog meat should always be cooked thoroughly. Brucellosis is not transmitted through properly cooked meat. Care in handling and cooking wild game is an important part of disease prevention.

Brucellosis in humans is called undulant fever. Symptoms include a recurrent fever, chills, night sweats, weakness, headaches, pains in muscles or joints, loss of appetite and weight loss. Symptoms can disappear for weeks and then reappear. Hunters who become ill or exhibit these symptoms who have been exposed to wild pigs should consult their doctor about Swine Brucellosis.

Wild hogs can spread Brucellosis to domestic swine. Hunt clubs that relocate wild hogs unknowingly increase the risk of spreading Swine Brucellosis into new areas of the state.

To minimize the threat that wild pigs pose to domestic swine operations, farmers are advised not to introduce wild pigs into herds or to attempt to market wild-caught pigs. Have your veterinarian blood test all new stock before adding them to the existing herd. A memorandum to the stockyard operators from the State Veterinarian's Office asks that they not accept swine, which appear to be feral/wild at their regular weekly auctions. At the stockyard state and federal veterinarians take blood samples from swine that appear to be feral/wild in nature. Other recommendations include double fencing out wild pigs from areas with domestic pigs. Do not butcher wild pigs on the farm or feed offal from dressed wild pigs to domestic pigs. The probability of disease transmission between feral and domestic populations is not great if the feral hogs are remotely separated.

Over the past few years, the State Veterinarian's Office and the United States Department of Agriculture Veterinary Services have jointly participated in projects to control Brucellosis in wild swine. The projects have dealt with determining the safety and efficiency of Brucellosis vaccine in wild swine. The trials have included developing ways to administer an effective vaccine to the wild hog population without danger to other wildlife.