

PRESS RELEASE – WHY IS HUNTING WILD BOAR A CRIME?
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WHO: HOGS and DOGS
WHAT: HOW HUNTING DOGS ARE TRAINED TO CATCH HOGS
WHEN: NOW
WHERE: ANYWHERE THE BOAR POPULATION THREATENS
WHY: MISREPRESENTATION OF TRAINING AS HOG-DOG FIGHTS

For further information contact the Concerned Catch Dog Coalition at 703-966-9830

With the recent arrests in Florida for 'Hog – Dog' fighting, it is important that the media and public understand more about the United States population of wild boar and the training of hunting dogs which are used to catch and hold a wild boar on a hunt. The "fight" is no fight at all. The misperception of the local media, the humane society, and similar organizational representatives could hinder the training of these dogs to help local farmers and homeowners with the eradication of a local nuisance and potential business or personal safety threat.

The purpose of using pens in catch work is to train the dog proper technique in a controlled environment. The dogs are taught to "catch and hold" the boar until the hunter arrives.

Dogs are trained to catch the boar on the cheek or ear, in order to keep the hog under maximum control and keep dog and hunter as safe as possible. Using a dog with no experience on a boar in the woods is dangerous for both hunter and dog, hence the reason for having a controlled area in which the dog can learn how to safely catch and control the wild animal.

There are instances when a dog should be a good "catch dog" based on it's personality but within a few training sessions it becomes clear that the dog is not the "right dog for the job". This is invaluable information because in an uncontrolled environment, like the woods or swamps, the dogs life and well being of the hunter are at risk if a dog can not do it's job perfectly. The boar will not fare well either, a dog who is not trained properly will not know where to "catch" or how to "hold" the boar damaging the boar unnecessarily. This is not a 'fighting' arena, there are no bets placed on who will fight to the finish or come out on top.

The dog always comes out on top, because it is a controlled training exercise that teaches the dog to catch the boar by the ear, hold on, and stops the boar from running any further.

The boars are left completely in tact, as found and captured in the wild. Tusks are left in place, not pulled or filed, as catch work in a pen must closely resemble that which occurs in the wild, in order to properly train the catch dog. Catch Competitions have been the object of recent controversy as their purpose has been widely misunderstood. In catch competitions, dogs compete against each other for the fastest catch in the pen, using proper technique. This is not a fight, but a timed training exercise to assure that the dogs are doing exactly what they are trained to do, before entering the unpredictable environment of an actual hunt in the woods. Catching with speed and accuracy relates directly to the safety of the hunter and dog in the field, and proper catching and holding minimizes discomfort in the wild boar. It has been proven that there are less nerve endings in the ear of the wild boar; therefore catching a boar by the ear inflicts less discomfort. In most competitions, the only thing offered is a Catch Dog title and a trophy to the winner, contrary to what has been charged by the HSUS of huge pay offs.

There is a long history of wild boar and the problems they cause, in the United States, including their nuisance to farmers and damage to expensive crops. The boar found in the United States originate from several lines of European wild boar and mixed domestic strains reverted back to a "wild state" and are armed with a unique combination of aggressive temperament, high breeding rates, large litter sizes, and adaptable and destructive eating habits--they will eat just about anything. Normal boar feeding behavior, called rooting,

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disturbs the soil. Boar rooting destroys vegetation, destroys the refuge and habitat of small mammals, ground nesting songbirds, and herptafauna (reptiles and amphibians). It worsens the effects of erosion. The wild boar has proven to be an outwardly aggressive animal that has been known to attack animal and human alike without provocation.

With increasing age, the male's canine teeth develop into long ivory tusks, which curve outward and can grow to more than eight inches in length. The boars use these tusks as weapons of defense and also on each other when fighting for dominance. With each opening and closing, the tightly set teeth of a boar's jaw act as a honing and sharpening mechanism for its tusks, thus making them literally razor sharp.

In the latter part of the 1900's the USDA began to implement disease eradication programs throughout the domestic livestock populations across the United States. Feral boar or "wild boar" did and still pose a threat as an uncontrollable carrier host for the diseases slated for eradication in domestic livestock.

The feral swine population in the United States is still growing. More than half of the nation has feral swine populations, with Florida and Texas reporting over a million swine each.

Due to the possible negative financial impact feral swine populations could have on their own businesses, farmers and ranchers continue to view them with much disdain. In many cases, modern day wildlife managers have also joined the ranks of farmers and ranchers and recognize their horrible affects on the ecosystem. Feral swine populations compete for resources with managed wildlife such as deer, turkey, and Northern Bobwhite quail.

With these issues becoming increasingly prevalent, there is now a thriving industry developing in the United States based on the hunting and or removal of feral swine. As hunting feral swine with dogs has proven one of the most successful methods, the demand for well-trained catch dogs has drastically increased to assist in the removal efforts. As cited from the Georgia DNR publication, Feral Hogs in Georgia; disease damage and control, "the most effective method for controlling feral hogs is a combination of shooting, live trapping, and hunting with dogs." Because of the hog's ability to adapt to changes in its environment, outwit traps, and sense the presence of humans long before they are in sight, a catch dog is at a significant advantage with its ability to track, run down, and successfully catch a cunning hog. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University in New York estimates that annual hog damage amounts to \$200 Million a year, and views this as a conservative estimate. They cause significant environmental diseases and damages that cannot be translated into dollar amounts. It is for these many reasons that the proper training of dogs to aid in the capture and removal of unwanted feral swine populations is so very important.

The arrests in Florida are classified under 'dog fighting' in the local jurisdictions because activist groups perceive the training of hunting dogs as fighting. They have to prosecute under 'fighting' because training of hunting dogs is actually legal. They have coerced state and local governments to prosecute innocent men as criminals. These same activist groups have boldly stated that they are against any and all types of hunting and believe it to be immoral. They believe that by stopping the training of hunting dogs they can eventually stop the act of hunting altogether and are willing to falsely accuse innocent people to further their agenda. In most jurisdictions, local authorities want nothing to do with the capture and removal of these feral hogs, and need the assistance of local hunters and their dogs to do what is necessary to protect crops, livestock, private property, and other local wildlife from the devastating impacts of wild boar.