



Door Modifications for Feral Hog Traps

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As feral hogs continue to spread across Texas, landowners are developing innovative trapping techniques. Although most trap styles are derivatives of the basic corral or box designs, several modifications can be made to trap doors. Door designs include the guillotine/drop door, spring/swing door, and rooter/lifter door. The rooter/lifter door can be modified to increase capture rate.

Rooter/lifter door modifications

Rooter/lifter doors are a popular choice among trappers because they allow for continuous capture of feral hogs.

However, these doors have drawbacks:

- The traps must be held open and pre-baited for several days to train the hogs to enter the trap.
- Once the trap is set, the hogs must push their way into it by lifting the gate. Naive young hogs typically enter the trap with less hesitation; however, older trap-shy hogs are often reluctant to enter through this type of door.

Figure 1



A piece of angle iron marked for cutting (A). After cutting (B and C), the iron can be heated and bent to form the desired configuration (D). The bracket is then welded. Designs may differ, depending on the door style.

For best results, the rooter/lifter door can be modified so that it initially functions as a drop door. After the first group of hogs is captured, the door then functions as a rooter/lifter door, allowing others to push their way into the trap.

Because rooter/lifter door designs differ greatly, modifications will also vary, but the adjustments described by Dan McMurtry of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA-APHIS) and explained below should apply to most situations.

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Materials needed

To modify a rooter/lifter door, you will need:

- Flat iron or angle iron
- A welding machine
- A drill
- ¼- or ⅜-inch bit
- Bolts
- Nuts
- Door hinges
- C-clamps
- Rope or chain

Steps for modifying a rooter/lifter door

1. Measure the width of the trap door and the length of the rooter panels. These dimensions form the bracket that will hold the panels open. The bracket in Figure 1 was made of angle iron.
2. Cut the angle iron in two places so that it can be bent to form 90-degree angles (Fig. 1). The exact measurements and cut lengths of the iron will depend on the size of the rooter door.
3. Attach the hinges to the bracket. The number of hinges will depend on the size of the trap door, with more hinges needed to secure larger doors.
4. Center the hinge(s) on the bracket and attach with C-clamps (Fig. 2A).
5. Tack-weld the hinges into place. This step ensures that the hinges will swing freely.
6. After final welding, attach a small piece of angle iron to the other end of the hinges (Fig. 2B). This will serve as part of the trigger mechanism. Again, it is important to tack-weld this piece to ensure that the hinges swing freely.
7. Using a drill equipped with a ¼- or ⅜-inch metal bit, drill a hole in the center of the angle

Figure 2



C-clamps secure two T-hinges to the bracket (A). Once secured, a welding machine is used to tack hinges into place. A small piece of angle iron is attached to the other side of the hinges to construct the trigger mechanism (B).

Figure 3



A ⅜-inch metal drill bit was used to drill this small hole into the trigger mechanism so that it can be attached to a trip wire.

Figure 4



A bolt attaches the bracket to the door frame (A). Once attached, rope or chain provides support to the bracket (B).



- iron (Fig. 3). This hole will be used to attach a trip wire to the trigger mechanism. The hole can be equipped with an eyebolt if desired.
8. Measure the rooter door frame to make sure that the rooter panels do not hang too low. The bracket must be attached to the frame at the proper height because the hogs need to pass freely through the door and under the rooter panels without tripping the trigger with the tops of their backs. The frame of these trap doors usually is made of 1- to 1¼-inch steel pipe, so take measurements to ensure a proper cut. If the rooter panels hang too low, a large hog entering the enclosure may trip the trap prematurely.
 9. Cut the bracket to fit the rooter door frame.
 10. Attach the bracket to the rooter door frame using nuts, bolts, and washers (Fig. 4A).
 11. Once the bracket is attached, support it with rope or chain (Fig. 4B).
- This design can be built quickly with little effort, and it can easily be removed, if desired.

Other modifications

Those without access to shop equipment, such as a welding machine or cutting torch, can still make modifications to achieve similar results. One such design can be constructed with a 4-inch hook and eye latch and a 4-foot-long two-by-four. Simply attach the hook and eye latch set to the end of the two-by-four (Fig. 5). Then mount the

Figure 5

A two-by-four is used as a bracket on a rooter type door (A).



Once in place, the hook and eye latch set holds the panels up (B).



Figure 6



This design supports the door, allowing a large boar to pass freely underneath.

two-by-four to the top of the roter gate by running it through one of the squares on the panel. This modification allows large boars to enter the trap easily (Fig. 6)

To reduce the risk of capturing nontarget animals such as deer and calves, one option would be to string a piece of baling or barbed wire across the middle of the door opening. Although the wire will be a minor obstacle for a hog, it will usually deter nontarget animals.

State regulations

The Texas Animal Health Commission regulates the holding and transportation of feral hogs from the property where they were captured. Follow the appropriate regulations if you plan to transport captured hogs to a holding facility or to slaughter.

For more information on these regulations, see http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/swine/swine.html.

Summary

A few minor modifications to a typical roter/lifter door can increase the number of feral hogs captured by a trap.

Acknowledgment and disclaimer

This publication was developed as part of the Plum Creek Watershed Feral Hog Project, with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Integrated Water Quality Program. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied.



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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Edward G. Smith, Director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System. 12M, New