

Feral Swine Survey – Cognitive Testing for 2021 Survey

To assess respondents' understanding of the new and revised questions on this survey, and the potential measurement error associated with them, survey methodologists in the Methodology Division conducted 19 cognitive interviews with farm and ranch operators. (Approval for 20 interviews was granted through the OMB generic testing docket 0535-0248). In order to limit the amount of burden put on participants, the entire questionnaire was not tested with every respondent, and respondents were randomly assigned to one of three groups that reviewed certain portions of the survey.

The cognitive interviews were conducted with farmers and ranchers in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, between October 13 and November 5, 2020. Since the focus of the 2021 survey is on livestock, recruiting focused on farmers and ranchers that had livestock, including cattle, goats, and equine.

Cognitive interviews were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which made in-person interviews unfeasible. In almost all cases, respondents had the questionnaire in front of them, either on paper or on their computer screen. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each.

Some of the changes that were made based on cognitive testing include bolding for emphasis of some words, rewording some questions such as questions about “nearby” and “surrounding” properties to allow for more consistent comprehension across respondents, combining some of the pasture questions to reduce burden, adding a “don’t know” option where respondents seemed to need it, re-ordering some of the damage questions to minimize order effects seen in testing, and providing clarity on some of the cost questions.