

Subject Feral Swine and Fur Farms

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## Overview

This bill makes a number of changes to state statutes based on recommendations from a report prepared by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (*Report on Feral Pigs and Farmed Mink*) as required by a law passed last session (see Minn. Laws 2023, ch. 60, art. 4, § 100). The purpose of the report was to identify and clarify the responsibilities of the DNR, Department of Agriculture (MDA), and the Board of Animal Health (BAH) for managing feral pigs and mink.

## Summary

Section	Description
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| 1 | <p><b>Fur farm data.</b></p> <p>Adds a cross-reference in the Minnesota Data Practices Act to new fur farm license data provisions established in the bill.</p>   |
| 2 | <p><b>Restricted species and domestic hog control.</b></p> <p><b>Subd. 1. Definitions.</b> Adds a definition of “domestic hogs,” expands the definition of “restricted species” to include additional pig species, and modifies the definition of “release” for purposes of restrictions on releasing domestic hogs and restricted species.</p> <p><b>Subd. 2. Restricted species permit required.</b> Removes reference to prohibitions on releasing restricted species (new restrictions are established in the next subdivision).</p> <p><b>Subd. 2a. Release of restricted species or domestic hogs prohibited.</b> Establishes prohibitions on releasing restricted species and domestic hogs. Establishes new requirements of violators, including requiring registration with the BAH, implementation of confinement standards and record-keeping requirements, and reimbursing MDA for the costs of inspecting the premises annually.</p> |

**Section**   **Description**

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**Subd. 3. Permits.** Eliminates the ability of MDA to issue permits for transporting, possessing, purchasing, or importing restricted species for commercial purposes.

**Subd. 4. Notice of release of restricted species or domestic hogs.** Requires the owner of a domestic hog or restricted species to report its release to a conservation officer and the BAH within 24 hours and makes the owner responsible for its recovery. States that if an owner doesn't provide the required notification or fails to recover the animal within 72 hours of providing notification, the animal is considered feral swine, subject to provisions for feral swine under chapter 97A, and is no longer the property of the owner.

**Subd. 5. Enforcement.** Adds peace officers to those who may enforce the provisions of this section and allows MDA to impose administrative penalties for violations as follows: up to \$1,000 for the first offense, up to \$1,500 for the second offense, and up to \$3,000 for the third and subsequent offenses.

**Subd. 6. Penalties.** States that a person is liable to the state for costs associated with the release of a restricted species or domestic hog.

**Subd. 8. Containment.** Requires MDA to develop containment standards and record-keeping requirements.

3      **Game farms.**

Removes fur farms from the game farm licensing statute (new fur farm license requirements are established in the next section).

4      **Fur farms.**

Establishes separate fur farm licensing requirements similar to existing requirements with a few additions, including establishment of an unspecified licensing fee to be deposited in a new account and appropriated to the DNR for administration and enforcement of the fur farm licensing provisions, requirements for the DNR to develop containment and disposal requirements as well as disease testing and reporting requirements for fur farms, and fur farm license data provisions to make certain data private.

5      **Definition.**

Establishes a definition of "domestic hogs" and "release" and modifies the definition of "feral swine" for purposes of feral swine and domestic hog release prohibitions and penalties in the next section.

Section	Description
6	<b>Prohibited actions; penalty.</b> States that a person violating prohibitions on possessing or releasing feral swine is liable for the actual costs incurred by the state and damages caused by the possession or release.
7	<b>Domestic hogs and feral swine response protocols.</b> Requires the DNR, in cooperation with MDA and the BAH, to develop protocols for responding to the release of domestic hogs and feral swine.
8	<b>Outreach required.</b> Requires the MDA, DNR, and BAH to jointly develop and jointly or separately promote and provide to the public outreach certain outreach materials for managing feral swine.
9	<b>Appropriation.</b> Provides an unspecified appropriation to the DNR for feral swine monitoring, outreach and response activities.
10	<b>Repealer.</b> Repeals Minnesota Statutes, section 17.353 (voluntary fur farm registration with the commissioner of agriculture).



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