

Hogs for a Cause kills feral hogs to 'share Jesus' with people in need

BY DEBORAH McKEON FME News Service | Posted 3 weeks ago

Hogs for a Cause, a ministry launched five years ago in Belton, takes processed feral hog meat and uses it as a means to reach out to people's hearts and souls, founder Dave Haehn said.

"We kill pigs and share Jesus," said Kristine, Haehn's wife and partner in Hogs for a Cause.

Dave Haehn moved his family to Central Texas seven years ago to start a sportsman-type ministry, but he didn't have a clear picture of what it was going to be. He found a couple of places to hunt, shared the meat from the hunt and that meager beginning morphed into what it is today, Haehn said.

It took two years working as a contractor in Afghanistan for Haehn to earn enough money to fund the ministry, he

said. He came home in December, and that money is already running out, he said.

"There is a Chinese proverb that says, 'An empty stomach has no ears.' We want to reach struggling families, but not just families that don't have enough food. Families struggle with their lives, too," Haehn said. "We're not a welfare ministry, but the food ministry opens doors."

Haehn said the ministry is based on John 21:17, in which Jesus tells Simon Peter to "feed His sheep."

"We spread the gospel one pound of meat at a time," Haehn said.

Volunteers go out to sponsored hog hunts or hunt on private land opened up to them for hunting purposes. They get as many feral hogs or other legally taken wild game as they can, process them and use the meat for the ministry.

The animals are slaughtered, and the meat is processed at a deer facility about 100 miles from Belton that allows Haehn to use it without cost.

It takes hours to get the meat ready to go to the processing facility and to be packaged, which also gives Haehn and his wife many hours to minister to people. People from age 8 to 80 volunteer, and those hours help to make a difference in peoples' lives, he said.

"We've shared the gospel with over 30,000 people and our goal is to share it with over 50,000. Another goal is to distribute 50,000 pounds of meat, but I think we'll beat that goal. We've already distributed over 25,000 pounds since January," Haehn said.

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Haehn and his volunteers recently served a meal to about 400 wounded warriors and their families at Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area.

The 1st Battalion, Warrior Transition Brigade presented a certificate of appreciation to Haehn and Hogs for a Cause for the group's support to the military.

"The soldiers really enjoyed the food and we appreciate the efforts of organizations like Hogs for a Cause in supporting our wounded, ill and injured soldiers," said Gloria Montgomery, public affairs specialist for the Warrior Transition Brigade.

A freezer truck that holds 11,000 pounds of meat is a real boon to Hogs for a Cause, but another one would greatly benefit the ministry effort. The group also has a 20-foot barbecue grill that can be used to help feed 1,000 people a day in emergency situations.

"What do we need to continue to spread the gospel and feed the hungry? We'd love to have 12 satellite operations all around the state. We're running out of hogs, so we need places to hunt with wildlife on it," Haehn said. "We need people to help and ATVs to be able to drive through the rough country to pick up the hogs. We want to have a permanent home for the ministry with our own central processing plant. Financial donations would also help."

Feral hogs are a plague in Texas, Haehn said. He said the female's gestation period is exactly three months, three weeks and three days, which means she could have three litters a year.

"It's been estimated about 2 million feral hogs run free in Texas, but I think it's more like 6 million. And at least 300,000 of those each year aren't hunted," Haehn said.

"A lot of people won't eat meat from feral hogs. If people understood how good the meat really is, that would help with the feral hog population because people would kill the hogs, process the meat and eat it," he added.