



# Local Hunters Contract 'Hog Freeze'

## By Steven Bridges The Goldthwaite Eagle

Jess sat frozen in the passenger seat watching a big wild boar tear up the fence right in front of my pickup. Dust flew in big clouds as the angry pig fought against the snare making the whole fence sway with each charge.

Jess's eyes bugged out. "You want me to do what?" he asked incredulously.

"Get out of the truck and shoot that hog before he gets away," I said. "That snare won't hold him for long."

Jess looked down at the little rifle between us and stalled. He got a little case of what I call Hog Freeze.

Jess stammered, "Will your .22 Hornet kill that big of a pig?"

"Sure," I said. "As long as you hit him right between the eyes." I added, "If you miss and he comes at you, jump in the bed of the truck. He can't get you up there."

My son Flint and my nephew Luke Thompson stood up in the back seat holding on to the back of our front seats. Luke yelled, "Hurry up Jess! Shoot it!"

Jess gave me a look as if to ask, "Are you serious?"

A few tense seconds passed before Flint piped up, "If you're not going to shoot it, give me the rifle. I'll shoot it!"

I knew that being taunted by my seven-year-old son would prove too much for Jess' ego. So, I smiled and pushed the rifle over to him.

Jess rolled his eyes, took a deep breath and scooted out the door. The boys cheered!

Jess jockeyed for position, flanking the struggling hog just enough to get a shot at his head.



**Jess Seward bagged this big boar wild hog while trapping with Steven and Flint Bridges and Luke Thompson on the XTC Graves Family Ranch over Thanksgiving break last year. The wild hog weighed in at 200 pounds.**

Jess raised the rifle and snapped off a round just as the hog turned to charge.

The boys went silent as the big pig dropped in a heap in the dust. Then a second later the boys erupted in cheers and shouts.

Flint said "Did you see that? What a shot!"

Luke added, "I was hoping the pig got a chance to charge, but Jess shot him too quick." I'm not sure whose side Luke is on sometimes.

I could see Jess breathing hard, having just let out the breath he'd been holding since he got out of

the truck. I noticed I was holding my breath too, so I let mine out in a low whistle.

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An hour earlier, Jess accepted my invitation to check my trap line along with the boys at the XTC Ranch in northeastern Mills County. Jess wanted to see how I set my snares for coyotes, bobcats, foxes, raccoons and yes, wild hogs.

Jess knew that I usually let the boys dispatch all the live animals on my line, so he wasn't expecting to shoot anything on this trip.

Jess asked what rifle I brought. I replied, "I brought my little .22

Hornet. It is plenty for anything I trap on my line. And, the boys aren't scared to shoot that small of a rifle."

As we drove along in my ranch truck, I was busy pointing out places I put snares. I explained how I set each one based on the varying situations around the ranch. Some snares were set small for foxes and bobcats. Some were set larger in the hopes of catching coyotes or wild hogs.

We were driving along a fence

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