

StinkyJournalism.org Editor's note: The article below has key paragraphs regarding \$ rewards for plantation owners for giant pig kills. See text highlighted in yellow below.....

Hunters boast of bagging bigger pigs than famous Hogzilla,

The Associated Press , State & Local Wire, June 10, 2007 Sunday 5:33 PM GMT, , 787 words,
By RUSS BYNUM, Associated Press Writer



PHOTO CAPTION: AP, Egan Hill Plantation

Roger Hosfelt, left, of Shippensburg, Pa., and hunting guide Keith Egan of Bloomingdale, Ga., pose with a large hog Hosfelt says he killed while hunting on Egan's hunting plantation in Bloomingdale, Ga., on March 10. Hosfelt, who says his hog was 1,040 pounds and 9 feet long, isn't the first person to boast he's killed a bigger pig. As Hogzilla's legend has grown, so has the number of hunters offering similar pig tales, including that of an 11-year-old Alabama boy and his father who said the boy shot a 1,051-pound wild hog on a hunting trip.

Roger Hosfelt travels the world hunting polar bears, giraffes, zebras and other big game, but he's especially proud of a trophy he recently bagged in Georgia a monstrous wild pig that, he says, tops the legendary Hogzilla.

"He looked like a big ol' brown bear. That's a supersize pig," said Hosfelt of Shippensburg, Pa. "People that take hunting as serious as I do, you're always out for the biggest and best."

Hogzilla has made headlines worldwide, been featured in a National Geographic documentary and inspired an upcoming horror movie since a hunter in south Georgia killed the giant swine in 2004.

Experts estimate it weighed in at 800 pounds and measured up to 8 feet long.

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In January, Bill Coursey of **suburban** Fayetteville said he shot a 1,100-pound wild hog in his neighbor's yard. Last month, an 11-year-old Alabama boy and his father said the boy shot a 1,051-pound wild hog, which he called "Monster Pig," on a hunting trip.

To one-up Hogzilla, a catchy name must be important for a challenger as its weight. Hosfelt, who killed his pig March 10 at a hunting plantation west of Savannah, has dubbed his hulking ham "Boss Hawg."

Keith Egan, who has led hog hunts on his 3,500 acres for the past decade, said it required two shots for Hosfelt to kill it. To weigh it, they had to load the hog into the bed of his pickup and drive to a nearby truckstop.

They weighed the truck with the pig in back, unloaded it and weighed the truck again. The difference between the two "Boss Hawg's" alleged weight was 1,040 pounds. Egan said he could hardly believe it.

"When (Hogzilla's story) first came out, I framed it and put in my lodge," Egan said. "Hunters would come down and say, 'I want that.' I'd say, 'The odds of finding one like that is probably one-in-a-million.'"

It's tough to root out the truth behind these half-ton hog stories. In each case, including Hogzilla's, the hunters buried or butchered the carcasses before they could be independently weighed. They took photos, perhaps kept the head and tusks, but the whole hog is gone.

Claims that these pigs were truly wild, rather than farm-raised, are likely hogwash, said Kent Kammermeyer, a retired Georgia Department of Natural Resources biologist who has studied feral hogs in the state.

"Monster Pig," it turned out, had been sold to a hunting plantation by an Alabama farmer who had raised the hog and called it by a less ominous name: Fred.

"A hog can't get that big in the wild, it takes so much food day-in, day-out to grow that large," Kammermeyer said. "They at least spent some part of their life in captivity, probably a large part of their life."

Egan said he's certain "Boss Hawg" was wild because he didn't buy the pig and there's no pig farms near his land. But hogs on his property don't go hungry. He said he sets out corn in feeders and grows potatoes and peanuts to fill their bellies.

The man who made Hogzilla famous, Alapaha hunting plantation owner Ken Holyoak, also suspects most of Hogzilla's rivals likely grew up on a farm. But not Hogzilla, he insists, judging by its huge tusks the largest measuring nearly 1 1/2 feet.

"I have them locked up in the safe," Holyoak said. "That's the only proof I've got that that's a real wild hog."

It's proof enough to make Hogzilla the largest North American trophy in the record books of the Safari Club International, which has tusk measurements for 1,080 feral hogs, said Doug Luger, records manager for the hunters organization.

Luger said Hogzilla's left tusk measured 17 5/8 inches long and 3 inches in circumference. Like the antlers on a deer, tusks provide a more permanent means of judging a hog because they don't decay.

"We don't record weight because you can't go back and validate that at a later time," Luger said.

According to Egan, the tusks on "Boss Hawg" measured about 8 inches which Luger said wouldn't even make the Safari Club's top 10.

No matter. When Egan makes his next annual trip to Harrisburg, Pa., to woo clients at a hunting show, he plans to share his booth with "Boss Hawg" stuffed, mounted and on loan from Hosfelt. "I'm 100 percent proud of it," Egan said. "We're going to put it all over our booth and say, 'Come hunt with us at the home of Boss Hawg.'"

Holyoak said the publicity over Hogzilla has certainly paid off for him. Hunting trips at his plantation stay booked solid through the winter, he says, with hunters from across the globe.

"I get asked about Hogzilla every day, all day long," he said. "I never would've dreamed that people would be so crazy about a hog