

Giving Props to ole Punxsutawney Phil and his buddies

As we all know, February 2 was the official Groundhog Day when many look forward to Punxsutawney Phil letting us know whether winter will drag on a bit or not. Most people find this event and Phil's antics quite amusing. A bit later in the spring, most people aren't quite so amused with the whistle pig.

The groundhog is a large rodent well equipped for digging. This creates problem number one, they leave some pretty large holes that can cause problems in ag land and home yards and gardens. The groundhog's diet is usually alfalfa and clover, but they also tend to munch on many of the plants and vegetables we all love to have in our own gardens. This creates problem number two.

So what's a person to do? First, pay ole' Punxsutawney Phil and his buddies some props, they really are pretty impressive guys if the problems above don't bother you. Secondly, you can try some of the methods below to eradicate this pest from your area:

- Exclude him: Fence in your garden or area if possible. Use a 3'-4' fence, and bend the bottom out at a 90 degree angle. Bury about 12" deep in the ground to prevent him from digging under. He can climb over fences, so you may want to top this with an electric fence line.
- Trap and remove him: There are many live traps on the market that can be baited and set to trap the live animal. He can then be removed to another area, but first check with your local animal control and the DNR to be sure this is allowed in your area.
- Exterminate him: Shooting, lethal trapping, poisoning, and blunt trauma are all methods some may employ to control pests. If you choose to go this route, again, check to be sure you're method is legal and safe for your area. Remember, pets and other desirable animals may inadvertently become your victims.
- Make him a star!: Get him an agent and a movie deal! It's rumored that Phil had his lowly beginnings in a Sac County vegetable garden.