

AGRICULTURAL

FDA approves first ever medicated feed for wild quail created by Texas Tech professor



Mateo Rosiles

Lubbock Avalanche-Journal

Published 3:50 a.m. CT July 20, 2024 | Updated 3:51 a.m. CT July 20, 2024

A Texas Tech professor's nine-year research effort to develop an anthelmintic drug for parasite control in wild quail populations has gotten the final nod of approval from the FDA.

According to a release from the FDA, the drug will be integrated with feed and is effective in controlling parasites in wild quail in their natural habitat. For example, eyeworm parasite infection levels in the Rolling Plains region of West Texas and cecal worms throughout Texas.

The feed will be called QuailGaurd, and it is the medicated feed for wild quail approved by the FDA. The feed will not only help control parasite levels but also help give the quail multiple health benefits through infused vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

According to the FDA, Ron Kendall, professor of Environmental Toxicology in the Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory at TTU, was the driving force behind the research of the drug and was funded through the Park Cities Quail Coalition and the Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation.

"This was a momentous project involving over a decade of research and ultimately involving dozens of highly credentialed professionals and has resulted in the publication of 44 scientific research papers so far," said Kendal in a statement. "I am a quail hunter myself and feel passionately that QuailGuard will contribute to quail conservation and sustainability efforts. I would like to thank my colleagues, my contacts at FDA, the volunteers at PCQC, and RPQRF for their financial support as well as other contributors to our effort, and would like to recognize former RPQRF chairman Rick Snipes, who provided leadership for this effort."

Through a joint venture between Kendall and PCQC, an LLC was established under the drug's name, with no paid employees and Joe Crafton volunteering as president. This was done so that the majority of royalties from the sale of QuailGuard would go to PCQC and be spent on quail research and education in Texas.

How to use QuailGuard

The FDA recommends placing the feed with strategic feeders — not broadcast feeders — for a 21-day period twice a year in the spring and fall.

According to the FDA, using a 50 lb. bag per application and one feeder per 200 acres, QuailGuard will cost approximately 50 cents per acre for treatment once a feeding strategy has been set up.

Texas quail population in West Texas, Panhandle region

According to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Services, both the Northern Bobwhite and the Scaled Quail can be found in the Lubbock and Amarillo regions.

Northern Bobwhites are generally found in riparian and riverine bottom habitats, where tree thickets grow adjacent to pasture lands and relatively dense ground-level cover exists. It is described as "chicken-like" and is mottled-gray, brown, black, and white in color.

Scaled quail has earned the nickname "blue quail," "cotton top," or "Mexican quail," according to the TPWS. It can be identified by its bluish-grey color with extensive markings on the back, breast, and abdomen with blackish "scaly" markings.