

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 837
Asked on 20 November 2013

MR HOBBS asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MR McVEIGH)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise of the State Government's initiatives and red tape reductions which will help support landholders in the control of feral animals?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to minimising the impact of feral animals. As a sign of this commitment, in June this year the State Government hosted a Feral Animal Summit in Toowoomba which was attended by a range of organisations and individuals including landholders, industry, conservation, and land management agencies. There were also some banks who would potentially provide finance to landholders for exclusion fencing or other control programs in attendance. Information from the Summit will guide the development of a framework to deal with particular feral animal issues.

As Minister, I have taken direct action to cut red tape that was hindering landholders from participating fully in wild dog and feral pig control by allowing the use of meat for baiting that is not certified for human consumption and by lessening the restrictions on the use of 1080. The previous Labor State government had the ridiculous requirement that bait meat be of 'human consumption' grade.

Notification requirements for 1080 bait users have been reduced. Landholders now only have to notify neighbours within one kilometre of the bait site instead of the two kilometres applying previously.

Previously, landholders had to get permission to bait from neighbours within one kilometre of the bait site. This has been removed and landholders now only have to notify neighbours. However, getting permission from neighbours may still be required by councils in peri-urban areas.

Producers can now store commercial baits for the duration of the baiting program.

To build on these initiatives and to give producers more flexibility, I have recently asked the Queensland Dog Offensive Group to advise me on implementing a plan that will allow graziers and others with the appropriate certification, to prepare 1080 baits. This will deliver faster and more efficient 1080 baiting services to landholders to control wild dogs in Queensland.

The responsibility for declared pest animal control rests with the landholder. Local governments also have a responsibility to manage declared pest animals through the pest management planning process.

To help local councils and landholders, DAFF staff carry out research and assist with pest animal management in Queensland.

Currently the Department is directly involved with a range of research programs including:

- determining the ecology of peri-urban wild dogs;
- monitoring the impact of cluster fences on production and environmental values including wild dog control;
- impact of rabbits in North Queensland;
- attitudes to rabbit control in Southern Queensland;
- population dynamics of feral pig populations in Southern Queensland; and
- population dynamics of Chital deer in North Queensland.

Eight additional officers have also been appointed across the state to help landholders manage feral animals, including establishing a team of five specialist wild dog officers to help communities manage wild dog problems.

Front line officers provide technical advice, facilitate feral animal mapping using GIS technology, supply 1080 for use in local council control programs and train authorised 1080 users. They also work with councils and landholders to develop ongoing landholder leadership in pest management. Significant success has been achieved in areas where landholders have formed local committees to manage pest animal control in their local areas.