

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 760

Asked on 15 September 2015

MR LAST asked the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing (MR BYRNE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Minister's recent announcement that extra funding will be made available to fight feral cats and wild dogs—

Will the Minister extend this funding to include chital deer, which are also Class 2 declared pest animal species under Queensland's Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, to allow for the eradication of chital deer which are in plague proportions and impacting on Burdekin farmers.

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

Although the additional funding under the Feral Pest Initiative is specifically to combat wild dogs and feral cats, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is undertaking actions to assist landholders manage feral deer.

Feral chital deer were declared as pest animals under Queensland legislation in 2009, which means that landholders are responsible for taking reasonable actions to control feral deer populations and local governments are responsible for the management of the species in their local government area through their pest management planning process based on local conditions.

Departmental officers assist landholders in meeting their obligations by providing technical advice and training and support to local government officers. They also work with local governments and landholders to develop landholder-led feral deer management.

The department is currently conducting a research project to develop optimal control methods for feral deer in the Charters Towers region and operational staff will ensure that findings are communicated to other local governments and Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups.

Local coordination is an important part of pest animal management and the department, local government and NRM groups participate in regional planning in the Burdekin area. I am advised that the Regional Pest Management Group has identified feral deer as a priority and the NRM group, NQ Dry Tropics, is working to identify methods to assist landholders control feral deer.

The department advocates co-ordinated control and recommends that landholders liaise with the Burdekin Shire Council and their neighbours to ensure that control efforts undertaken are effective.

The department has developed the *Feral Deer Management Strategy 2013-2018* to provide a strategic direction for the management of feral deer with the aim to minimise the impacts of feral deer populations, limit the spread and prevent the establishment of new populations.

Departmental officers advocate taking advantage of seasonal conditions to control feral deer. In drier conditions, control may become easier as feral chital deer stay close to remaining water supplies. The department also advocates the complete removal of small isolated populations of feral deer to prevent feral deer impacts in the future.