

Question on Notice

No. 619

Asked on 21 June 2022

MR S BENNETT ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) if the Minister is aware of the current problems facing producers across the Burnett due to the rise in the feral pig population, (b) what is the State Government doing to support people operating feral pig traps for the farming sector in Queensland and (c) what programs or grants are available to help farmers or private feral pig trap operators to fund trapping operations?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is aware of the issue of feral pigs in the Burnett region and throughout Queensland. Feral pig numbers fluctuate with the seasons. Due to additional food availability owing to the recent *La Niña* event, it makes it difficult to control feral pig numbers.

The Queensland Government supports local governments, industry and landholders who undertake feral pig control activities. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) invests in invasive plant and animal regional services, research, planning and policy which all support stakeholders to deal with the impact of invasive animals such as feral pigs.

It is important to note that landholders have a General Biosecurity Obligation under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act), and biosecurity officers from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) are available to provide support with technical advice about feral pig control, including trapping, which can help them in meeting this obligation. These officers also support Local Government Biosecurity Planning processes that help coordinate feral pig management.

My department supports continual improvement in feral pig management with research scientists undertaking:

- the testing of management strategies for feral pigs;
- best practice integrated management of feral pigs; and
- feral pig habitat modelling and monitoring for African Swine Fever management.

Best practice management is a structured and consistent approach to the management of feral pigs to achieve enduring and cost-effective outcomes. Best practice management evolves over time following consideration of new scientific information and accumulated stakeholder experience with the range of reasonable and practical management measures available for feral pig control.

The Queensland Government also funds effective feral pig management in Queensland through the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI). QFPI has directly allocated \$565 715 since 2015 for feral pig control projects. \$200 000 was given to South Burnett Regional Council to promote and establish landholder led working groups to undertake coordinated management of feral animals and weeds in strategic areas of the Burnett and Gympie region.

The Queensland Government has recently announced that it is providing funding of \$1 million in the 2022-23 Budget for Round 7 of the QFPI to support the management of invasive plants and animals. Further details of the program will be released shortly, but it is important to note that QFPI is a competitive funding model, and any projects are assessed on their merits including value for money.

Currently, officers from DAF are undertaking an African Swine Fever (ASF) prevention and preparedness project aimed at minimising the impact of ASF. An important part of this project is supporting landholders in managing their feral pig responsibilities under the Act. The ASF program is running preparedness workshops across many regions of Queensland. All workshops have a feral pig management component that provides technical advice and support to industry, local government, and other relevant landholders.

The Queensland Government looks forward to continuing to work with industry, local government and the community to help reduce the impact of feral pigs in the Burnett region and elsewhere in Queensland.