

AWI R&D Update

Wild Dog Control

Stock losses from wild dogs cost Australian farmers an estimated \$65 million a year. In the wool industry alone, wild dogs cause production losses of \$24.2 million every year. In some areas, wild dogs and foxes kill up to 25% of lambs born each season.

Wild dogs vary widely in size and shape. Some are similar to a kelpie and weigh around 15kg, but 70kg feral domestic dogs have been captured in the wild.

To address the immediate wild dog crisis facing woolgrowers, AWI allocated:

- Over \$1 million to boost the number of wild dog traps and baits laid across Australia.
- A further \$600,000 over three years for regional groups applying the nil-tenure process to develop and apply wild dog management plans.

Repeated dog attacks on sheep take a large emotional toll on woolgrowing families, affecting their efforts to care for their sheep and rebuild flocks in parts of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and along the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales and Victoria.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) considers a wild dog to be any dog not under the control of a human, including dingoes, hybrid dingoes, feral and peri-urban dogs. To reduce the toll on woolgrowing families, AWI funds social and biological research into wild dogs, and on-ground activities to involve land managers with and without sheep in wild dog control.

AWI and the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) fund a National Wild Dog Management Facilitator to discuss wild dog control options with regional groups, bringing group members up to speed with the latest wild dog research and control methods. The facilitator is supported by AWI funded state wild dog coordinators.

AWI'S RESPONSE TO THE WILD DOG PROBLEM

Further AWI commitments to wild dog control include:

- \$30,000 to support grazier participation in national forums on wild dog management
- A \$400,000 study of the social, economic and environmental impacts of wild dogs to support the need for improved controls
- Funding for research to determine and register the most effective aerial baiting rates
- Investment through the IA CRC to develop PAPP, a new bait to control wild dogs and foxes with an antidote for working and pet dogs

KEY OUTCOMES

Community cooperation saving sheep and wildlife

Wild dog management planning workshops are bringing woolgrowers and other regional stakeholders together to tackle the real issue of reducing wild dogs, not the short comings of particular control methods. As with most pest problems, no single 'quick and easy' method will solve all problems. The best results come from applying a suite of complementary control methods that consider:

- Wild dog behaviour, social structure, habitats and food preferences
- Animal welfare and non-target impacts
- Public safety and occupational health and safety issues
- Legislative and practical constraints.

In 2001, a trial of the nil-tenure process by a regional group reduced stock losses by an average of 75% each year in southern NSW.



In 2010/11, a regional group in the Queensland shire of Murweh removed almost 2,000 wild dogs over 18 months, in an effort to halt sheep losses. In Blackall, Queensland, community groups reported higher koala numbers after 78 wild dogs were removed.



GET INVOLVED

Woolgrower groups seeking assistance in protecting their flocks from wild dogs should contact Dr Jane Littlejohn at AWI on (02) 8295 3100 or jane.littlejohn@wool.com

Existing groups can access new tools and information on practical pest animal control methods, new products, and techniques to monitor the success of pest animal control programs through the IA CRC PestSmart Toolkit.

New skills for woolgrowers

With wild dogs moving into areas where they have not traditionally been, the AWI-supported National Wild Dog Facilitator plays an important role in sharing skills in wild dog control with woolgrowers and other regional land managers. Group members are building their skills in mapping and recording wild dog activity, and in control methods like baiting, trapping, shooting, fencing, guard animals and aversion techniques. Take home guides are available to all woolgrowers through the Invasive Animals CRC (IACRC) PestSmart Toolkit.

New baits in the pipeline

AWI together with the IA CRC and Animal Control Technologies developed the new toxin, PAPP, or para-aminopropiophenone. PAPP gradually reduces oxygen to the brain, effectively sending the wild dog to sleep before it dies within two hours of taking the bait. PAPP baiting trials show large drops in wild dog activity.

PAPP is being assessed for registration and should be commercially available within the next couple of years. PAPP is not a replacement for 1080, rather an additional tool to control wild dogs and foxes.

TOOLS AND INFORMATION

AWI supports several major projects in wild dog and fox control. Learn more about these projects at: www.wool.com/pestanimals

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) and its partners including AWI, invest in new tools and technologies to reduce the impact of invasive animals on Australia's economy, environment, and people. Visit: www.invasiveanimals.com

Wild Dog PestSmart Toolkit - the IA CRC and its partners publish a range of guides and tools on practical wild dog control. For free copies of the resources below, email the IA CRC at contact@invasiveanimals.com or visit: www.feral.org.au/pestsmart/wild-dogs

- Glovebox Guide for Managing Wild Dogs
- Managing Vertebrate Pests DVD - using foot hold traps for the capture of wild dogs and foxes across Australia
- Working Plan to Manage Wild Dogs (Green Book)
- Guidelines for Preparing a Working Plan to Manage Wild Dogs (Brown Book)
- Guardian Dogs - Best Practice Manual for the Use of Livestock Guardian Dogs

PestSmart YouTube channel - video clips with practical instructions on a range of pest animal control methods, new products and monitoring techniques.

Learn more at: www.youtube.com/PestSmart

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