



Image by: Ashley Carlson

AS A LANDHOLDER, CONTROLLING DEER IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Biosecurity risk

Feral deer are a priority pest animal in the Hunter Region because of the negative impact they have on agricultural and natural environments. Feral deer populations occur across various areas of NSW and are ever increasingly appearing in new locations around NSW.

Feral deer occur across a wide range of landscape types, including:

- in and around towns and cities
- agricultural production areas
- natural environments

The impacts deer have on our landscape include:

- creating traffic hazards and causing vehicle accidents
- damaging native plants, garden trees, forestry, vineyards and orchards by rubbing from antlers
- browsing and trampling gardens, agricultural produce, native vegetation and changing vegetation structure and composition
- creating new game trails, resulting in erosion and increasing access for feral predators
- displaying intimidating or aggressive behaviour towards people, livestock and domestic pets
- competing with stock and native herbivores for limited pasture and fodder
- damaging fences
- decreasing water quality by increasing soil erosion, wallowing and faecal contamination

Legal responsibility - General Biosecurity Duty

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility where Government, industry and the people of NSW work together to protect the economy, environment and community from the impacts of pest animals.

Under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* every landholder has a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD):

Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised.

All landholders must reduce the risks posed by deer populations on land under their care and control. Examples of activities a landholder could undertake include:

- undertaking feral deer control on your property
- reporting sightings of feral deer via FeralScan
- participating in cooperative programs to plan and manage feral deer populations across landscapes
- not transporting or releasing feral deer onto any land

There are laws involved in feral deer control so please visit the DPI website for the most up to date information.

Manage your situation

You need to consider

There is no broad scale control method for feral deer in NSW. The two most used techniques for control of deer is aerial and ground shooting. Exclusion fencing, including both netting and electric, is also a control technique but does not remove the deer problem. For these reasons, deer programs can be resource intensive and do need to persist over long periods of time targeting the population as a whole and not just individual deer.

Assessing your property

Start by identifying and mapping the location of deer and/or the extent of their impact on your property using FeralScan. Discuss with your neighbours your concerns and the deer impact they are experiencing.

Things to look for include:

- fresh scats and tracks
- fresh rubbing on trees during the varying mating seasons
- extensive grazing on budding plants such as vines and orchards

Monitoring

Monitoring is a key part to understanding the deer problem in your area. Landholders can undertake monitoring with the use of remote trail cameras to identify deer and the paths they travel.



Set goals

Work with your neighbours to determine what resources (e.g. time, money and expertise) you have and what you want to achieve.

Prepare an action plan. Start with short term goals (for a 12-month program) and how you will continue an ongoing program to ensure numbers do not return to the original population.

Working together

In discussion with your neighbours/community, consider joining or starting formalised groups such as Landcare or pest control associations.

Local Land Services can provide technical advice to any landholders, however there are many resources available online to assist landholders increase their knowledge of feral deer and their control.

Control options

An appropriately licenced person is required to ensure best practice techniques in terms of the humane destruction of animals.

Shooting – primary control

Ground and aerial shooting is the primary method of control for feral deer. Aerial shooting is generally organised by NSW State Government however some private companies also offer this service. Shooting is considered a high risk activity in urban areas, however professional licenced shooters can undertake ground shooting in any landscape if required.

Shooting should target populations across as many properties as possible. If coordinated shooting programs are sustained over a period of time a localised decrease of feral deer can be achieved.

Trapping – secondary control

While deer trapping has been around for some time, remote triggered traps are an emerging control technique for feral deer in NSW. Trapping can be expensive and labour intensive, and programs should be planned with this in mind.

Fencing – preventative measure

Exclusion fencing can be installed around properties or assets, however it is a large investment as it must be at least 1.8m high to be effective.

Electric wire can be retrofitted to any standard stock fence to act as a deterrent and can be used for other pest animals. Electric fencing has been working well around assets such as vineyards and orchards. Maintenance and testing is essential for effective fencing.

Where to get more information

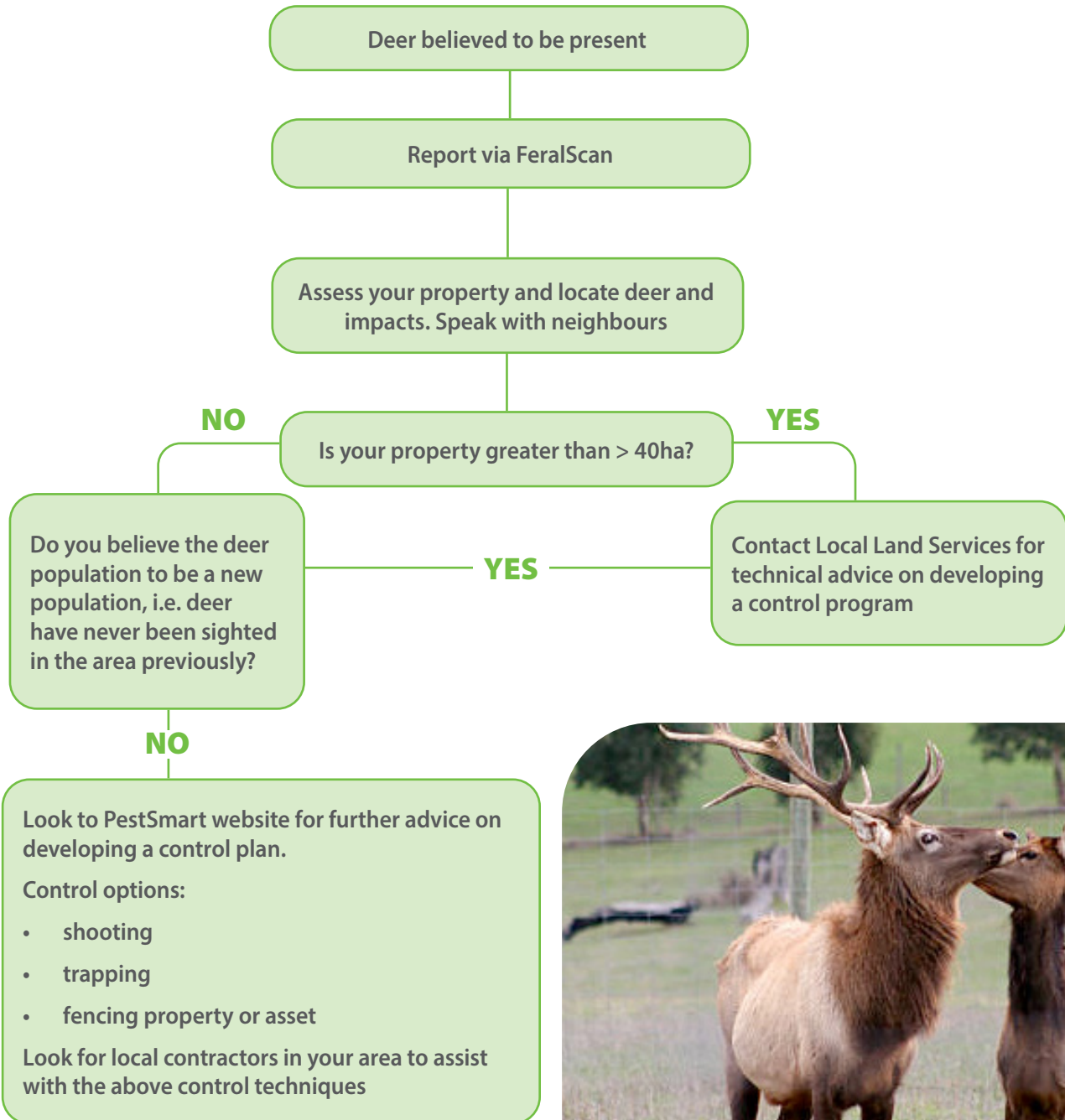
For further information on the history, impacts and guiding documents for feral deer

https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1145296/Deer-ID-brochure-draft-1-EDIT.pdf

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/vertebrate-pests/pest-animals-in-nsw/feral-deer/feral-deer>

<https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkits/feral-deer/>

Follow the steps below if you believe deer to be on your property



For more information about Hunter Local Land Services:

1300 795 299 • admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter • www.facebook.com/HunterLLS/