

## Why are feral pigs a problem?

Feral pigs can damage pasture, agricultural crops, native vegetation and carry a number of endemic parasites and diseases, which can affect livestock and humans. Feral pigs are opportunistic omnivores, eating grass, fruit, grain, carrion, grubs and worms. They also eat underground plant material, such as roots and bulbs and often uproot large amounts of ground in search for food.

Feral pigs are a declared pest under the **Local Land Services Act 2013** and landholders are obliged to control the pest on their land.

Feral pigs pose an enormous biosecurity risk to NSW and the Australian economy and it is critical that they are controlled.

## Fines for transporting or releasing feral pigs

Strict laws are in place to deter people from transporting and releasing live feral pigs. These fines include:

- up to \$22,000 for transporting live feral pigs
- up to \$5,500 for liberating feral pigs (or any pest animal)
- up to \$2,200 for having a live feral pig (or any live pest animal) in your possession.

Authorised officers continually monitor for these illegal practices.



Sarah Moriarty

## We're here to help - just ask!

Consult your nearest Hunter LLS Biosecurity Ranger who has the knowledge and experience to assist you to manage feral pigs and other invasive species by:

- providing advice
- supplying baits and traps
- assisting with coordinating baiting programs
- becoming involved with other control techniques such as trapping programs.

## Contact us 1300 795 299

### Maitland Saleyards

Ph: 02 4932 8866

### Merriwa

Ph: 6548 2175

### Muswellbrook

Ph: 02 6542 4444

### Paterson

Ph: 02 4930 1030

### Scone

Ph: 02 6545 1311

### Singleton

Ph: 6572 2944

### Taree

Ph: 02 6551 8994

### Tocal

Ph: 02 4939 8967

### Wingham

Ph: 02 6553 4233

### Wyong

Ph: 02 4352 5100

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## Problems with feral pigs?

A landholders guide to the continuous control of pest animals



Jason Wisheart

[www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au)  
1300 795 299

## What are feral pigs?

A feral pig is a pig that:

- was born or can live in the wild
- demonstrates wild and erratic behaviour
- is not domesticated
- has some or all of the following morphological features:
  - long coarse hair
  - elongated snout
  - sloping hindquarters

Feral pigs prefer to live in wet areas that provide food, water and dense shelter such as wetlands, watercourse areas and forests, but can also live in agricultural areas. They are most active in the early mornings and at night. Feral pigs tend to live in mobs, with mob size dependent on seasonal conditions and habitat. Feral pigs can breed all year round, with breeding success depending on feed availability.

### Signs of feral pigs

- Uprooting of earth
- Disturbance to crop and pastures
- Fence damage with mud and hair on the wire
- Tracks
- Faeces
- Wallows along the edge of dams
- Rub marks on trees / posts
- Sightings

## What can you do to control feral pigs?

### Poisoning

- 1080 is currently the only poison registered in NSW for the control of feral pigs. 1080 poison is a restricted chemical product and requires users to hold a chemical users certificate. Your local Hunter LLS Biosecurity Ranger can assist you to obtain training if you do not currently hold a certificate



- 1080 use needs to follow the restrictions of the Pesticide Control Order including notifying your neighbours, putting up signage and following restrictions on how close you can use poisons to your neighbour's property
- Baiting is normally carried out along tracks or in areas where pigs are known to feed
- 'Free' feeding (without toxin) prior to poisoning is essential. Firstly, to attract as many pigs as possible to the area and have them feed consistently at that location and secondly, it gives an estimate of how much poisoned bait is needed and gives the ability to monitor the feed uptake to ensure no non-target animals are consuming the free feed.

### Trapping

- Traps are an effective method of catching large numbers of pigs. Traps are generally made with firm mesh and steel posts securing them into the ground. Contact your local LLS Biosecurity Ranger to discuss the availability of loan traps and trapping tips and techniques
- Livestock should be removed from the paddock so they do not eat the free feed from the trap
- To complete trapping successfully, free feeding should be done prior to setting up the trap. Once pigs are feeding, traps are set up with an entry and exit with free feed inside so pigs can walk freely in and out. Eventually, the trap is set with no exit and a trigger wire to set the trap off when the pigs are inside the trap
- Traps should be set in areas where pigs are frequenting, for example along the tracks at holes in a fence or at water points
- Traps must be checked every 24 hours
- Pigs caught in traps must be humanely destroyed.

## Aerial and ground shooting

- Aerial shooting can be an effective method of controlling feral pigs particularly when numbers are high, terrain is largely inaccessible or large areas need to be covered. Significant costs can be incurred with aerial shooting which often follows large coordinated 1080 baiting and trapping programs
- Opportunistic ground shooting is usually only effective when you are targeting small numbers or individuals which have eluded other control
- Be very careful when dealing with feral pigs as they can be easily frightened and scared away from a site if disturbed by hunters or shooters. If pigs are disturbed, they will move into new areas and cause more damage and often become more difficult to control.

## Exclusion fencing

As with any pest control program, a single control method used in isolation may provide limited local control of pig populations; however, a coordinated program involving neighbours and utilising multiple control methods will prove more successful over a broader area.

Hunter LLS can provide advice to landholders on the most appropriate and effective control techniques and also assist you in destroying feral pigs including loaning pig traps and other useful equipment.

## Health risks

Pigs carry bacteria including **Leptospirosis** and **Swine Brucellosis** which can be transmitted to humans. Hunting dogs have a high risk of contracting Swine Brucellosis and have the potential to transmit the disease to humans.

The most important means of preventing disease in humans is to take precautions when coming into contact with animals.

### What should I do if I find feral pigs on my property?

Contact your nearest LLS office and speak to a Biosecurity Ranger for advice on control options.