

Control options in feral pigs: **Aerial Shooting**

How effective is aerial shooting?

Aerial shooting is an effective, lethal, feral pig control method conducted by licenced shooters from a helicopter. It is particularly useful when the population is in abundance or for short term protection of assets such as lambing ewes.

Cost-effectiveness decreases as the population decreases or occurs in very dense terrain. In a survey conducted in 2020, land managers in NW NSW responded that aerial shooting was the most effective lethal control method.

What is the cost and how big is the benefit?

The main cost component of this control method is the flying time of the helicopter and the licenced shooter. As a result, a large range of costs were reported; between \$8 to \$75 per pig.

Variability in pricing is largely dependant on flying time. Lower pig populations result in longer flying time per pig. Area-wide shoots can create cost efficiencies.

Aerial shooting is an immediate control option for reducing feral pig populations.

In NSW, LLS at times promotes discounted area-wide aerial shoot programs.

Key farming enterprises were modelled to understand the net economic benefit of various feral pig control methods. Using different data combinations of pig damage, crop yield, commodity prices, control cost and effectiveness, results found the highest net economic benefits were achieved using aerial shooting and 1080 baiting across all modelled enterprises (Table 1).

Using accredited professional shooters ensures humane and efficient control.

Immediate economic benefits of this cost-effective option should ensure aerial shooting is included within regular area-wide control programs.

Table 1: Net benefits of aerial shooting by farming enterprise

	Cotton	Wheat & barley	Faba beans	Chickpea	Sorghum	Hay	Maize	Sheep
Benefit up to (\$/ha)	\$67	\$23	\$59	\$95	\$34	\$47	\$24	\$17
Average benefit (\$/ha)	\$26	\$6	\$23	\$36	\$12	\$16	\$7	\$5

Further information:

- Findings summarised from the NW LLS funded study *Cost benefit analysis of feral pig control in North West NSW*. To read the full report visit www.lls.nsw.gov.au or www.agecon.com.au
- Contact your local LLS representative for information on current area wide management strategies ph. 1300 795 299
- Standard operating procedure for [Aerial shooting of feral pigs](#)