



Image by: Sarah Moriarty

## AS A LANDHOLDER, CONTROLLING FERAL PIGS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

### Biosecurity risk

Feral pigs are a priority pest animal in the Hunter Region because of the negative impact they have on agricultural and natural environments. Feral pig populations occur in different numbers across NSW. In the Hunter region they are widespread throughout the Upper Hunter area, to a lesser degree in the Lower Hunter and varying degrees across the Manning. Their distribution is directly related to ephemeral and permanent water sources. Populations can be found readily near permanent water sources and expand out to new areas.

The impacts feral pigs have include:

- preying on newborn lambs
- reducing yields of agricultural crops
- damaging and competing for pasture and native vegetation
- damaging fences
- fouling water sources through wallowing and defecation
- preying on native animals
- carrying diseases which affect animals and humans

### 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 land managers can reduce the risks posed by feral pig populations on land under their care and control, by undertaking activities that reduce:

- the risk of feral pigs breeding on or being introduced to their land
- the risk of feral pigs being released into the environment
- the risk of feral pigs accessing easy food sources on their land
- the negative impacts of feral pigs on priority assets on their land and neighbouring lands

Examples of activities a landholder could undertake to achieve to these outcomes are:

- participating in coordinated pest animal control programs
- undertaking activities that incorporate both primary and supplementary pest animal control
- reporting any feral pig activity to neighbours and their local biosecurity officer
- ensuring potential food sources such as carcasses, offal and food scraps are properly disposed of
- reporting any deliberate release of feral pigs or other suspicious activity to the DPI Invasive Plants and Animals Enquiry Line on 1800 680 244
- ensuring feral pigs have no contact with domestic pigs

## Manage your situation

### You need to consider

Feral pig populations can be both stationary and transient. Weather conditions and food availability affect the movement of feral pigs throughout a landscape. Feral pigs home range is determined by habitat type, food supply, size of individual animals and population density. In many habitats there is a seasonal trend of movement between specific areas depending on the current food supply. Even if disturbed, feral pigs will not move far and will readily return to their home ranges.

Effective control of local populations can be achieved, although it may take weeks to a few months. These efforts will need to be followed up when populations re-establish the area. A broad landscape approach can achieve long term gains and bring feral pig numbers down to manageable levels.

### Assessing your property

Start by identifying and mapping the location of feral pigs and the extent of their impact on your property. Discuss with your neighbours your concerns and gauge feral pig impacts they are experiencing. Things to look for include:

- sightings
- predation of lambs
- rooting (digging of soil for underground food such as roots and bulbs)
- crop and fence damage
- pads (a feral pig game trail)
- tracks and scats
- wallows (indentations in waterbodies)
- mud rubs and tusk marks on vegetation and infrastructure
- nests

### 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 that the impacts are mitigated.

### Working together

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

## Controlling feral pigs is your responsibility

There are many resources available online to assist landholders increase their knowledge of feral pigs and their control.

Local Land Services can provide technical advice and training to any landholders and can loan out feral pig traps, provide 1080 training and poisoned bait.

## Control options

### Baiting – primary control

Baiting using Sodium fluoroacetate (1080) is an option for some peri-urban and rural properties where the Pesticide Control Order (PCO) allows. It is a primary control for feral pigs. Landholders must hold relevant chemical qualifications to use poisons in NSW.

A particular PCO consideration is distance restrictions, which require bait to be laid at least:

- 150m from your own habitation
- 500m from another habitation
- 20m from a domestic water supply
- 5m off a boundary fence

### Aerial shooting – primary control

Aerial shooting is generally organised by NSW State Government however some private companies offer this service. Aerial shooting targets populations as a whole and is recognised as a highly effective control technique in quickly reducing feral pig populations.

### Ground shooting – secondary control

Ground shooting is an option in rural areas and some peri-urban areas. Rules around firearms use apply. Landholders can shoot feral pigs on their properties. Professional licenced shooters can undertake ground shooting in any landscape on a landholders behalf.

### Trapping – secondary control

Trapping is an effective control technique for feral pigs. When undertaken consistently and properly it can reduce population numbers dramatically. This technique is used where the 1080 PCO conditions cannot be met or the off target risk is too high. Trapping is also an effective follow up control after a 1080 baiting program or an aerial shoot.

Private professional pest controllers are available to undertake this work on a landholders behalf. Local Land Services can provide traps to landholders but a landholder will need a firearm to humanely destroy the animal.

### Fencing – Preventative measure

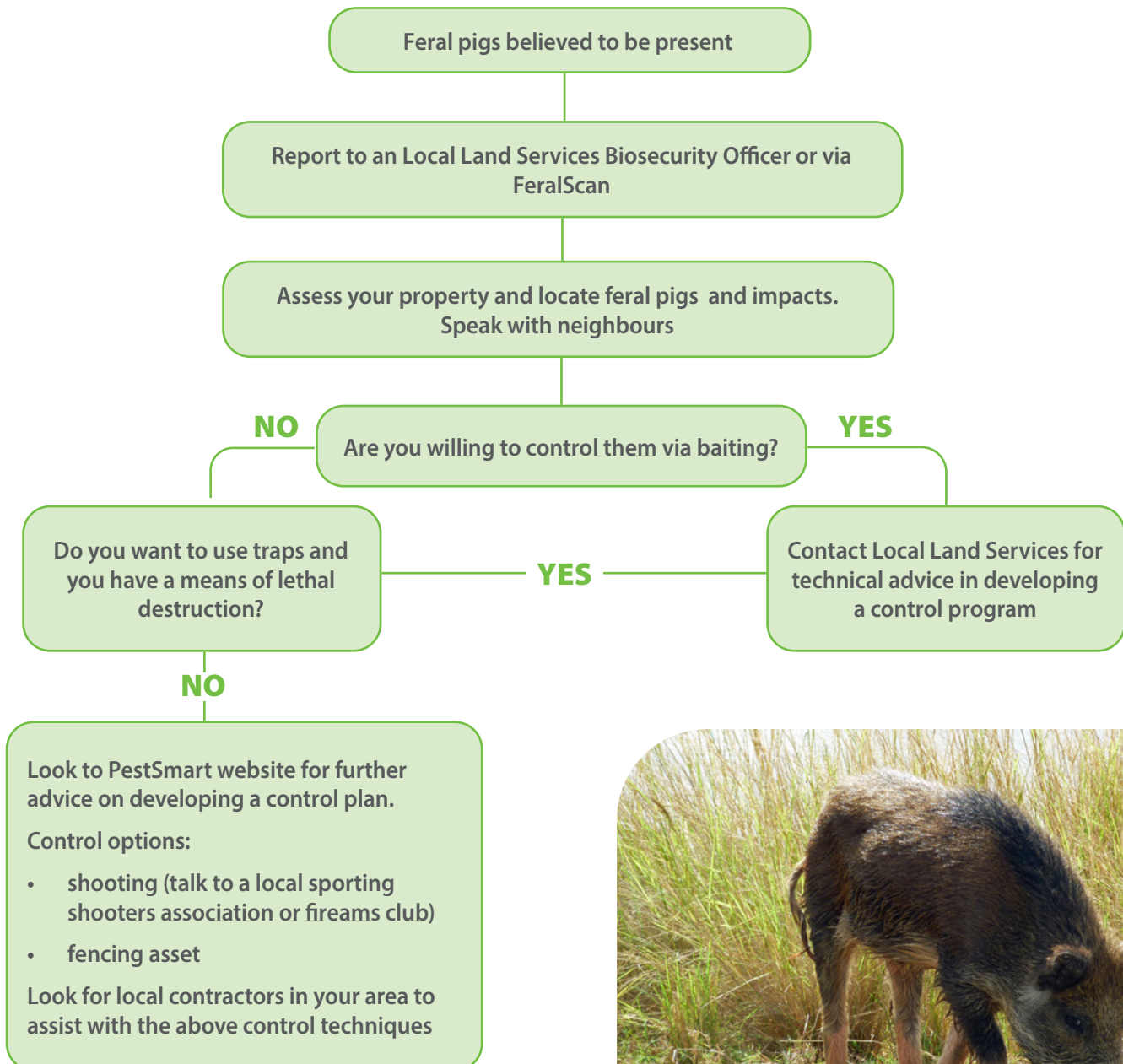
Feral pig proof fencing can be installed around assets such as domestic pigs. Maintenance is essential to effective fencing.

## Where to get more information

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

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

*Follow the steps below if you believe feral pigs to be on your property*



**For more information about Hunter Local Land Services:**

1300 795 299 • [admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au)

[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter) • [www.facebook.com/HunterLLS/](https://www.facebook.com/HunterLLS/)