



AS A LANDHOLDER, CONTROLLING FOXES IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Biosecurity risk

Foxes are a priority pest animal in the Hunter Region because of the negative impact they have on agricultural and natural environments. Foxes occur in all areas of NSW across all landscape types.

The impacts foxes have include:

- preying on lambs, poultry and goat kids
- preying on native wildlife and competing with them for habitat
- carrying a number of diseases

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 *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 fox populations by undertaking activities such as:

- controlling foxes as they are sighted
- participating in coordinated pest animal control programs
- undertaking activities that incorporate both primary and supplementary pest animal control where possible
- reporting any fox activity or dens to neighbours and through FeralScan
- ensuring potential food sources such as carcasses, offal and food scraps are properly disposed of

Manage your situation

You need to consider

Foxes are widespread, highly mobile and efficient breeders. They can quickly move in and recolonise areas where fox numbers have previously been reduced.

Full eradication is never achievable – managing their impacts is the most viable option and needs to continue over time.

Assessing your property

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

- visible sightings day and night
- missing/dead animals such as chickens
- fox scats and tracks
- dens

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.

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

Local Land Services can provide technical advice to any landholders, however will not undertake coordination of control programs in urban areas. In a peri-urban situation, Local Land Services will assist with coordination of a control program if there are already five or more willing landholders.



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 the only primary control for foxes. 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:

- 20m from your own habitation
- 150m from another habitation
- 10m from a domestic water supply
- 5m off a boundary fence

Trapping – secondary control

Trapping is an effective control technique for foxes. While it won't control populations, it can be effective in controlling problem individuals.

Soft-jawed traps with rubber-padded jaws or cage traps can be used.

Trapping is useful in peri-urban environments and in situations with concerns about off-target animals taking baits, however it leaves a live fox to destroy. Always have a lethal method of destruction planned before undertaking trapping.

Private professional pest controllers operate in all areas from urban through to rural.

Shooting – secondary control

Shooting is a secondary control option. This option is preferable in rural areas and some peri-urban areas as opposed to urban areas where firearms have a higher risk.

Den destruction – preventative measure

Foxes make dens in a range of habitats. Keeping your property free from piles of debris such as timber reduces the chance of foxes breeding on your property. They will make their own den, but also inhabit other animals' burrows. Caution needs to be taken to ensure that the den is actively used by foxes before destruction takes place.

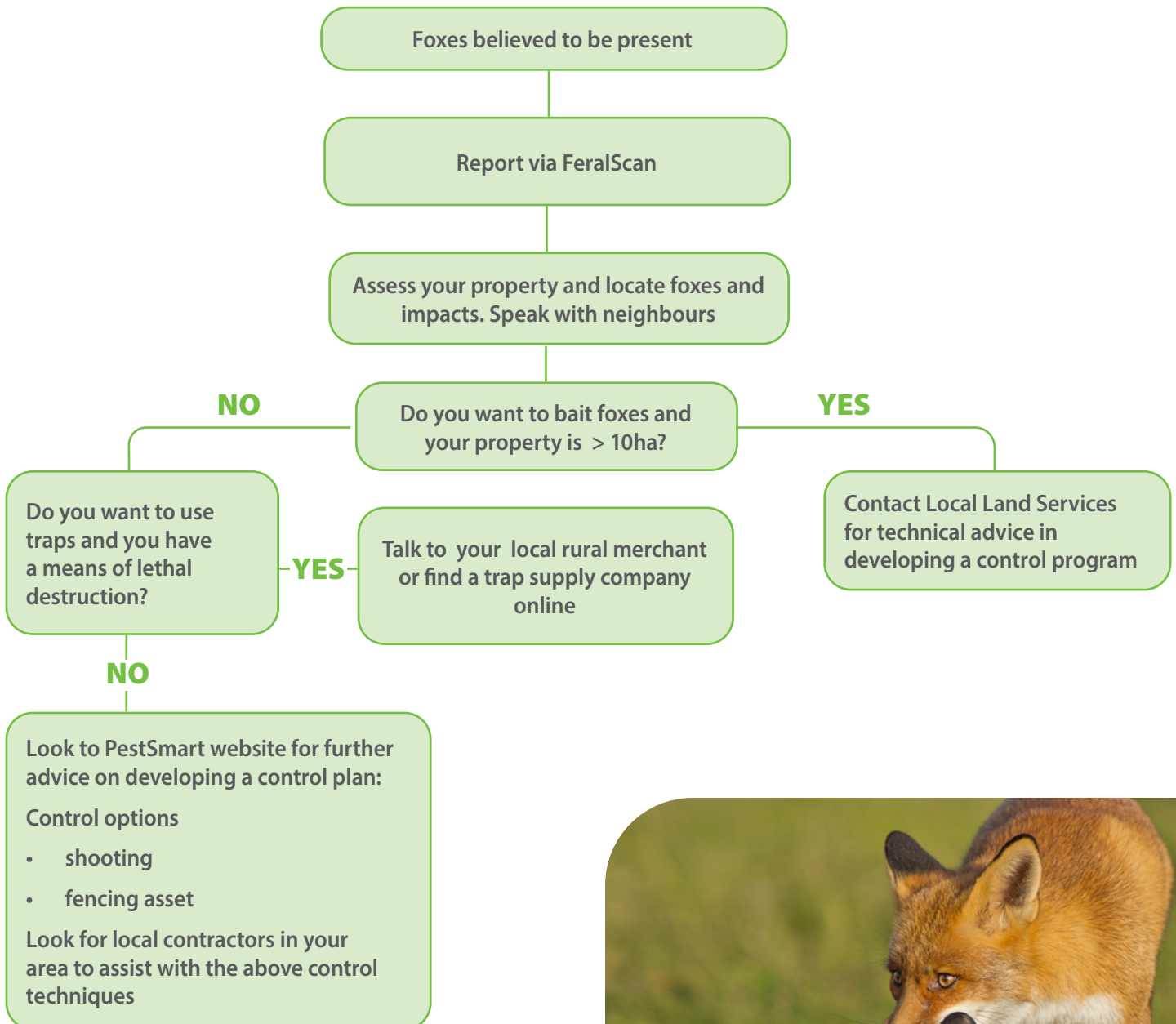
Fencing – preventative measure

Fox proof fencing can be installed around assets such as a goat yard or chicken coop. Maintenance is essential for effective fencing. Offset electric wire can be used to prevent foxes going under or over the fence.

Where to get more information

For further information on the history, impacts and guiding documents for foxes
<https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkits/european-foxes/>

Follow the steps below if you believe foxes to be present 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/