

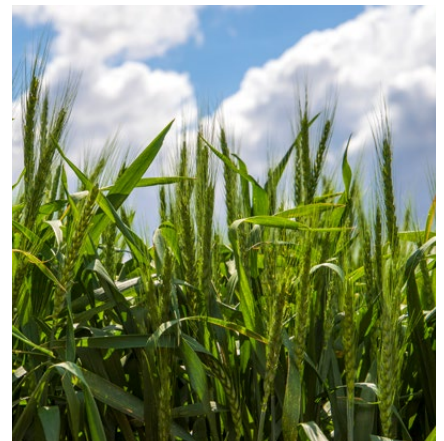


Are feral pigs impacting your bottom line?

The improved seasonal conditions across NSW over the past 12 months have triggered huge increases in feral pig populations. A survey conducted by local company AgEcon evaluating the actual financial impacts from feral pigs was commissioned by North West Local Land Services (NWLLS) targeting our region's farmers for the winter 2020 and summer 2020/21 cropping periods. The survey showed regional commodity losses were calculated to be 132,000 tonne of grain, 15,000 bales of cotton and 11,000 lambs in the past 12 months or equivalent to a total of \$47,231,000.

Feral pigs are a widespread problem across our region with survey responses showing they are present on 90% of properties surveyed. The surveys covered an area of 543,644 ha in the NWLLS region.

Sharing knowledge and learnings is vital to tackling the feral pig problem and improving our methods. This survey showed that 49% of respondents had participated in area wide management programs for feral pigs in Winter and 41% Summer 2020-21. All agreed that the benefits of participating in area wide management programs were larger and longer than individual farm programs. These on farm results clearly demonstrate the advantages that would come from group pest control to cover large areas cooperatively.



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Feral pigs are everyone's problem

Feral pigs are not just a problem for cropping areas, with regional losses of lambs in sheep (wool and meat) enterprises were estimated at \$1.7 million. An individual farmer near Bathurst had estimated his sheep enterprise losses at \$300,000 for the 2020-21 period.

Wheat experienced moderate per hectare losses, however due to its dominance in the cropping landscape, in terms of regional losses wheat was calculated to have the highest losses and the highest range of losses. During the analysis period, wheat contributed to 43% of the total regional losses at \$20,364,000.

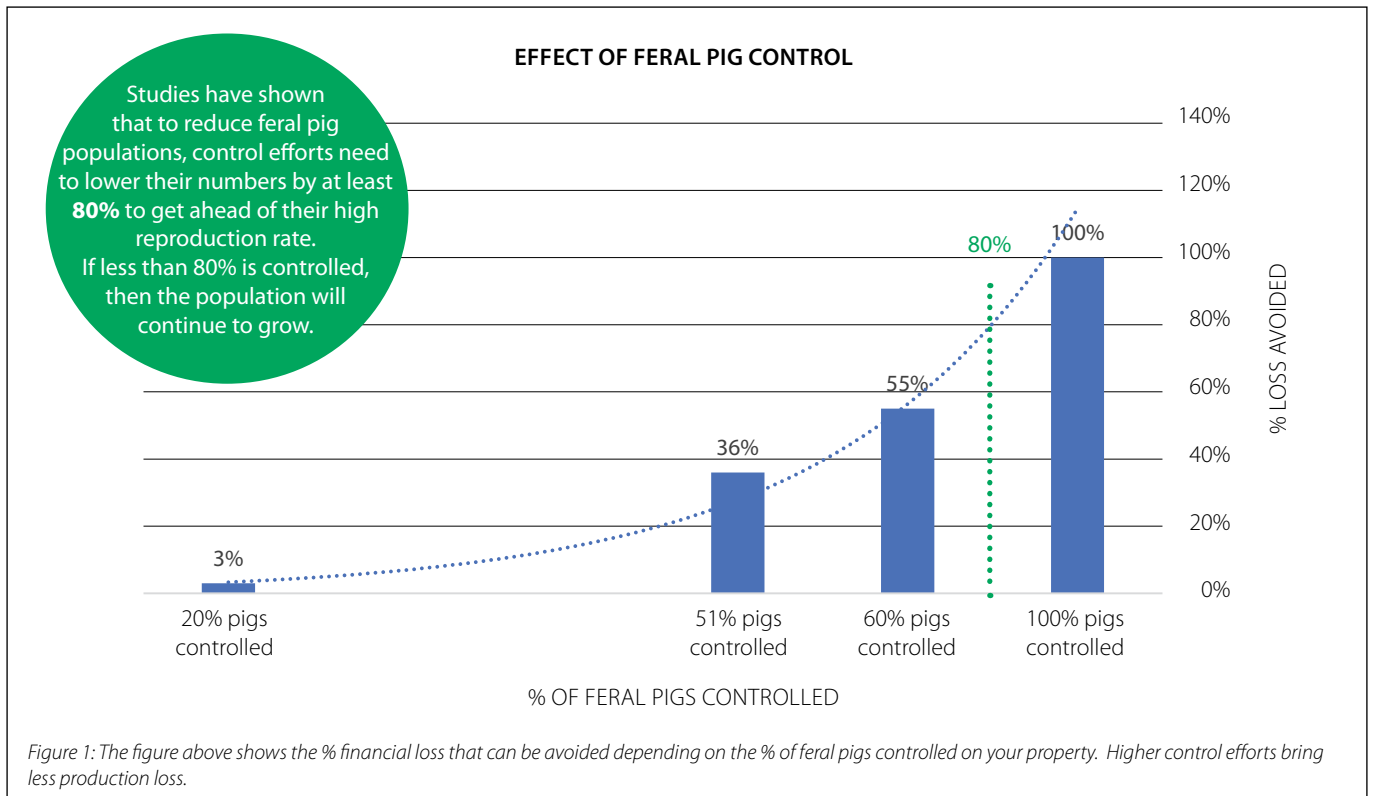
ENTERPRISE	COST OF FERAL PIGS	KEY MEAN INPUTS			REPORTED COMMODITY LOSSES (NW NSW Region)	REGIONAL LOSSES \$
		Anticipated damage by feral pigs (% of yield)	Regional yields	Commodity prices		
Barley for grain	\$26/ha	3.2%	3.75 t/ha	\$215/t	27,000 t	\$5,866,000
Canola	\$23/ha	1.8%	2.2 t/ha	\$571/t	<1000 t	\$338,000
Chickpeas	\$30/ha	3.5%	1.5 t/ha	\$572/t	11,000 t	\$6,073,000
Cotton lint (irrigated)	\$113/ha	1.75%	11.5 bales/ha	\$564/bale	13,000 bales	\$7,108,000
Cotton lint (dryland)	\$24/ha	1.75%	2.4 bales/ha	\$564/bale	2,000 bales	\$1,273,000
Faba beans	\$13/ha	2.6%	1.5 t/ha	\$345/t	<1000 t	\$262,000
Hay	\$4/ha	0.75%	3 t/ha	\$190/t	<1000 t	\$56,000
Maize for grain	\$24/ha	1.5%	4.8 t/ha	\$212/t	<1000 t	\$127,000
Sorghum for grain	\$34/ha	4.3%	3 t/ha	\$262/t	15,000 t	\$3,986,000
Wheat for grain	\$25/ha	3.2%	3 t/ha	\$265/t	77,000 t	\$20,364,000
Sheep and lambs	Dependent on flock size & stocking rates	4.2%	251,000 lambs in the region	\$169/hd	11,000 lambs	\$1,778,000
Total regional losses Winter 2020 & Summer 2020-21						\$47,231,000

Table 1: A summary of reported feral pig impacts on various enterprises across the North West Local Land Services region for 2020/21.



Stronger together

Broadscale pest control is proven to have the biggest impact on feral pig populations. When managed and coordinated by pest groups, the effectiveness is amplified. Some survey respondents indicated that their feral pig presence had reduced after joining a group control program with their neighbours and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).



What works best?

Respondents reported an increasing abundance of feral pigs in the summer cropping period and noted that the recent drought had helped to suppress feral pig numbers. 93% of respondents attempted to control feral pigs during the study period and every respondent agreed that on farm feral pig management was important to them.

The survey showed that ground shooting was reported as the most utilised control method and was the most relied upon, followed by trapping. Unfortunately, these two methods have also been found to be the least effective (Powell et al., 2020).

For further information and to gain advice on feral pig management options and pest groups, contact your local LLS Biosecurity Officer on 1300 795 299.

These surveys will continue for a further two years and are open to all NWLLS landholders. If you wish to be involved in future surveys, keep an eye out on social media for the AgEcon survey or **contact your local Biosecurity Officer by calling 1300 795 299.**

The information in this flyer has been sourced from 'Cost benefit analysis of feral pig control in North West NSW' and a subsequent report focused specifically on the 'Economic impact of feral pigs on agricultural production in North West NSW: 2020-21' over a 12 month period that included the Winter 2020 and Summer 2020-21 crops. Both reports have been conducted by AgEcon and full copies of the reports can be found on the North West Local Land Services website.

References

Powell, J., Welsh, J., Marshall, A., & Revell, G. (2020). *Cost benefit analysis of feral pig control in North West NSW*. AgEcon
 Powell, J., & Revell, G. (2021). *Economic impact of feral pigs on agricultural production in North West NSW: 2020-21*. AgEcon.

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