

hi kay,

i would like to make comment about the pest animal enquiry. i hope its not too late.

1. The most significant pest animal issue australia wide is feral pigs. They do untold destruction to crops and vegetation, native or otherwise, and harbour diseases which we should be getting rid of. eradication of feral pigs would undoubtedly enhance our quarantine from the introduction of exotic diseases, especially if it were to enter australia in one of the more remote areas. the issue here is how to get rid of them. 1080 is a wonderful bait, but greenies are against it. as a naturally occurring product in native plant species, most native animals have a very high level of resistance to it which is why it is such a safe bait to use. it is very effective on wild dogs/dingoes/ foxes/ feral pigs, whilst not harming native birds etc. it has a short life in the environment and because its use is restricted by local councils in this area, is extremely safe.

i would think that the most important ones i am aware of are wild pigs, dingoes/wild dogs, foxes, rabbits, cane toad, fire ants, and maybe the crown of thorns starfish. i'm sure there are others i'm not familiar with. feral cats are becoming a big problem, perhaps bigger than foxes have been. they have more of an impact on the environment than livestock production.

feral goats seem to have a value attached to them and i think that provided there is value, the populations of these will eventually be harvested/harnessed by enterprising individuals.

2. quarantine is the most important way of preventing new pest animals. quarantine should be considered insurance of our vital rural industries and also our way of life (i.e. just consider fire ants). although the losses directly to agriculture through the importation of a pest animal is borne by the whole community through quarantine, the loss of our international markets and our freedom from disease would undoubtedly flow through to all sectors of the community in depressed economic conditions.

we need rewards for the inspectors who locate these animals at the ports to give them further incentives. we also need rewards for the brave souls who call quarantine when they have a suspect animal that may have "slipped through the net", rather than try to unsuccessfully eradicate the pest themselves. my late father often bought timber which came from malaysia, and he said all of the workers used to gather around the new shipments ready to kill any snakes that had come with it.

i think that it should be possible to eradicate rabbits and feral pigs, and maybe foxes, but that cane toads and dingoes are probably not able to be eradicated. i hope we are successful against the fire ants, they have the potential to destroy our way of life, as i'm sure you are aware.

state government control of dingoes in this area is excellent, when the yare actually doing it. the problem is that it is often reactive, or done after it really needed to be. if it was done more timely it would be better. they seem to co-ordinate well with local landholders when doing their baiting programs.

there has been a lot of subdivision in our local area, and i am certain that the new owners are not aware that they have the responsibility of controlling pest animals on their land. they need to be educated about the importance of control and appropriate methods.

thanks

matthew arkininstall.