

**NATIONAL
FERAL PIG
ACTION PLAN**

Do we have a feral pig problem?

Sheep production can be impacted by feral pigs in many ways, which may lead to animal welfare issues. Financial costs through productivity losses and damage to farm infrastructure are commonly experienced by producers.

Financial costs to sheep producers

- Minimal data is available on current costs of feral pigs to agricultural enterprises.
- In 2019, Australian specialist sheep producers alone spent between \$1.7-3.9 million on feral pig control (ABARES, pers. comm.).
- 38% of land managers participating in a survey¹ conducted in North West (NW) NSW in 2020 estimated lamb losses due to feral pigs to be between 1 and 5% (Figure 1).
- Damage caused by feral pigs was estimated at \$3/DSE¹.
- Estimated regional losses in NW NSW alone to sheep and lamb production during the 2020-21 season were estimated at \$1.78 million, based on a 4.2% lamb loss rate².

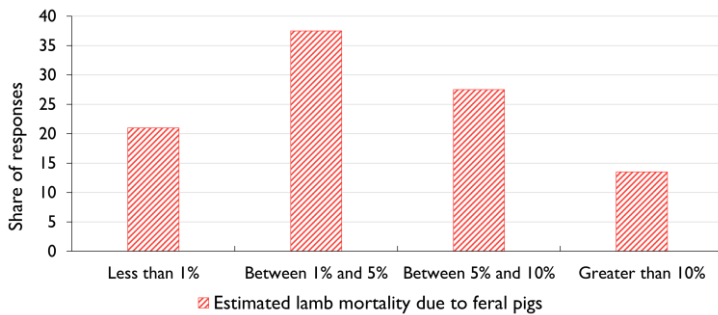


Figure 1: Estimated lamb losses by producers in NW NSW due to feral pigs²

Lamb predation

- Signs of feral pig feeding is different to foxes and dogs, which leave tooth marks on each side of the bite. Feral pigs may trample lambs.
- Lambs predated by feral pigs may have blood-stained belly wool.
- Predation of lambs typically occurs during the night.
- Boars generally hunt lambs more than sows.
- Twin lambs are more likely to be predated than single lambs.



Photo Credit: Dr. Peter Heise-Pavlov

Impacts on sheep production

- Lamb predation
- Reproductive losses
- Animal welfare impacts
- Disease transmission and weed spread
- Reduced stocking rates due to damage to pastures, watering points, forage crops, soil and/or land
- Damage to fences and farm infrastructure
- Consumption of feed intended for sheep
- Contamination of water
- Mental health impacts to producers
- Increased frequency of stock monitoring
- Time, labour and/or resources on control activities



Photo/credit: Dr. Ben Allan, USQ

Disease transmission risks

- Feral pigs can transmit Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). An incursion of FMD has been estimated to cost >\$50 billion to the Australian livestock sector.
- Infectious causes of abortion storms and stillbirths:
 - Leptospirosis – present in 26% of feral pigs in Northern NSW and QLD (Darren Marshall, pers. comm.)
 - Toxoplasmosis
- Salmonellosis
- Parasite transmission including cysticercosis (*Taenia hydatigena*), hydatids (*Echinococcus granulosus*) and liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*).
- Brucellosis risks to farm dogs.

¹ AgEcon (2020). [Cost benefit analysis of feral pig control in NW NSW.](#)

² AgEcon (2021) [Economic impact of feral pigs on agricultural production in North West NSW: 2020-21 season.](#) Final Report to NW Local Land Services.