



**NATIONAL
FERAL PIG
ACTION PLAN**

Demonstration site – Kangaroo Island Feral Pig Eradication Program

Closing in on eradication



This program is on track to achieve eradication of feral pigs on Kangaroo Island by June 2023.

The 2019-20 summer fires devastated Kangaroo Island (KI), with approximately 211,000 ha or 48% of the island's land mass affected. A silver lining that emerged from this devastation was the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to eradicate feral pigs from the island while their numbers are low, and vegetation is sparse.

In 2017, it was estimated that feral pigs cost Kangaroo Island producers about \$1 million annually. Feral pigs damage pasture and farm infrastructure as well as spread diseases. The removal of feral pigs will eliminate these costs and also reduce impacts on the recovering ecosystems and biodiversity, including endangered and threatened plants, birds and animals.

The Kangaroo Island Feral Pig Eradication Program, led by Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA) in partnership with the KI Landscape Board, is entering its final year.

Since its commencement in October 2020, the program has culled 839 feral pigs. It is estimated that there are less than 100 feral pigs remaining across the island.

The eradication team is using every tool in the toolbox to ensure that eradication is achieved. New technologies that have been embraced to ensure maximum efficiency include:

- Remotely triggered traps
- Thermally Assisted Aerial Culling (TAAC)
- HOGGONE baits
- Thermal ground shooting
- Camera surveillance

TAAC is the newest, and a very exciting, technology being used by the eradication team. Military grade thermal cameras carried in a helicopter are being used to detect feral pig heat signatures. A laser is then used to guide the airborne marksmen to the target when it is then swiftly and humanely destroyed. TAAC has enabled feral pigs living in forested areas to be identified, and then humanely and efficiently removed.

The Autumn 2022 TAAC operation flown by HeliSurveys Pty Ltd was conducted between March and April. Brenton Florance from the KI Landscape Board was the lead aerial marksman throughout the cull. This was the third of five TAAC operations scheduled for this project. A total of 25 feral pigs were culled over 43 hours of flight time that

extensively covered waterways across Western KI. The majority of these feral pigs were culled as lone animals. Importantly, the TAAC operation conducted in Autumn 2021, culled 126 feral pigs during 36 hours of flight time across the same area.



Photo- Feral pigs as seen during TAAC. Supplied by PIRSA.

The decreasing number of feral pigs identified and culled during Autumn 2022 is extremely promising. The effort being expended per pig is now exponentially increasing, indicating that eradication is close to success. It also reflects the intensity of efforts needed to remove remaining feral pigs.

Two more TAAC's are planned for the end of the program, one in Winter 2022, and a final one in Autumn 2023.

An Artificially Intelligent cellular connected camera network, comprising of 300 cameras, is being deployed to optimise staff efficiency, increase resource use and enable rapid response by ground staff to destroy any feral pigs detected. Motion sensing cameras with solar panels and aerials are being placed in known feral pig hotspots and watering points. These cameras are fully automated. Images taken of any movement detected are sent online and processed. If a feral pig is detected, an alert is immediately sent to ground staff for their action.

For more information, contact Matt Korcz, KI Feral Pig Management Coordinator, PIRSA. via email: matt.korcz@sa.gov.au.

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