

## Demonstration site: Western Riverina Pest Project- Aerial Autumn Pest Offensive



To target pest animals on both public and private land in the Western Riverina, an autumn offensive against pest animals has been implemented. This coordinated program undertook three months of ground-based trapping, baiting and shooting, primarily for feral pigs impacting key agricultural and environmental assets, ahead of an aerial pest control program.

The aerial control program focused on known pig breeding hotspots in the southern half of the project area. Pig breeding hotspots were pinpointed from annual aerial infra-red thermal surveys over the primary habitat within the project area.

Using a Squirrel helicopter, the NSW Feral Animal Aerial Shooting Team removed 1,021 feral pigs, 45 fox, 235 fallow deer, and 10 cats during 54 hours of flight time over 96,000 hectares.

Of the 24 private holdings invited to participate, 92 per cent of holdings consented to the program which covered 97 per cent of the intended area.

The decision to follow-up ground control strategies with aerial shooting took into consideration a number of factors. The prioritised wetland areas are predominantly inaccessible from the ground and control strategies on the periphery have not been able to penetrate these isolated populations.

The second consideration was that ground control methods require a reasonable amount of time to

establish sites and encourage good numbers of feral pigs to free feed. For this reason, it was necessary that enough time was provided for ground control to be completed prior to aerial operations, which would have interfered with the ground control efforts.

The third consideration came down to coordination and resources. The project coordinates with the aerial shooting programs of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service who are also a project partner. To add value to any aerial pest control program, coordination is prioritised wherever possible.

Following the aerial autumn offensive ground control has resumed with the support of an experienced pest control contractor. Trapping and poison baiting are the recommended ground control strategies for feral pigs by NSW Local Land Services to landholders in the project area.

For more information on the Western Riverina Pest Project, contact Suzie Holbery, WRPP Project Coordinator and Senior Biosecurity Officer, Riverina Local Land Services on [suzie.holbery@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:suzie.holbery@lls.nsw.gov.au).

To find out more about Riverina Local Land Services' role in pest animal management, please visit [www.lls.nsw.gov.au/riverina](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/riverina).

Visit the [Western Riverina Pest Project demonstration site webpage](#).