



Demonstration site – Kangaroo Island Feral Pig Eradication Program



Decision support tool used to guide on-ground operations

It is imperative that all feral pigs detected are destroyed in this eradication program.

A decision support tool, specifically developed for this eradication program, is used by operational staff to ensure that the most appropriate on-ground best practice management method is applied, based on mob size and behaviour of feral pigs

This decision support tool focusses on adequate free feeding and acclimisation to control tools, including baiting boxes required for use with HOGGONE sodium nitrite bait and traps, to ensure the destruction of feral pigs.

Free feeding is the most important step.

Feral pigs are tracked to a single site (using pig tracks and sign and/or cameras) and aggregated using free feed. Free feed is provided daily and for an indefinite period of time (can range from several days to 3-4 months).

Individual pig movements (where possible) are monitored using a camera network set up around the free feeding site. This enables information including age, sex and size of the mob to be determined.

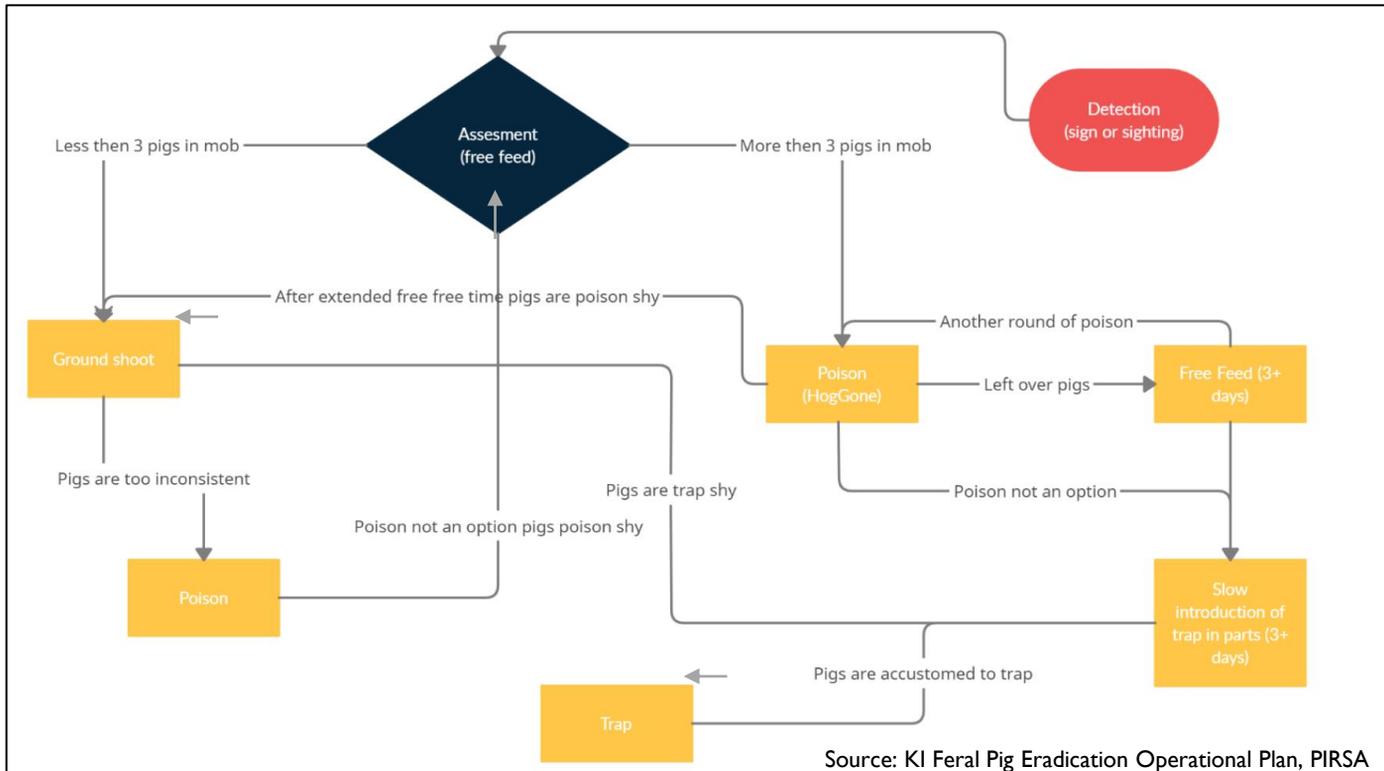
Free feeding is more successful in summer when resources are limited. During winter months, feral pigs are less likely to consume free feed.

Free feed type

The best food available is offered. The type of free feed used varies in different areas. Feed feed is therefore adapted to the preferences of pigs.

Generally, a grain mix containing faba beans, wheat and barley is fermented for about one week. When applied on the ground, molasses may be drizzled over the fermented grain to act as an attractant. In some cases, a mix of chicken pellets and corn is used. The amount of free feed provided per pig can vary due to region/location and season. On Kangaroo Island operational staff allow 10-15 litres of grain per day per pig.

Macropod carcasses may also be placed at the free feed site to attract pigs – typically, feral pigs eat insects present under these carcasses.



Source: KI Feral Pig Eradication Operational Plan, PIRSA





More than 3 pigs in a mob are present:

This group may comprise adult sows, piglets and/or boars.

Poisoning using HOGGONE bait is considered first.

HOGGONE placebo bait is mixed with free feed. It may be rolled into balls to assist pigs with recognising it as feed. The period of time that this is done for varies from days to weeks. Pigs are then trained to open the lid of the bait box over time.

Large volumes of both placebo and bait (e.g. 2 trays per pig) are used to maximise accessibility of all pigs to the bait. At each site, 2-3 HOGGONE bait boxes may be used depending on mob size.

If a baiting program did not remove all pigs, the free feeding process commences again. This may involve a combination of placebo and fermented grain to entice shy pigs to return to the site. Another round of baiting may then occur.

As HOGGONE bait is easier to use, I080 (sodium fluoroacetate) has not been used as part of this program

Trapping:

If baiting is not an option, such as when a landholder does not want baits to be used on their land, trapping is then considered.

Key points:

- The trapping site must be accessible by a vehicle to bring panels to the site.
- The size of the trap must be tailored to group size.
- Panels are placed 50 m from the site before getting set up, so foreign scents and objects are not introduced to quickly.
- Each panel is then introduced over time
- A period of free feeding to introduce pigs into the trap is then undertaken.
- Mob size is then remotely monitored by cameras and the door activated once all pigs are in the trap.
- With the low populations of feral pigs now present on the Island, trapping is no longer considered effective.

If pigs are trap shy or bait shy, ground shooting is then applied.

Less than 3 pigs in a mob are present

- Ground shooting is applied before any other tool

Ground shooting requires all operators to be highly skilled and experienced.

A firearm must only be engaged if all pigs present can be destroyed. The effective mob size that can be destroyed is reflective of the shooters skillset.

All operational procedures and outcomes are recorded in the customised mapping software by operational staff.

All operational staff must comply with:

- All relevant legislative requirements
- Model code of practice for the humane control of feral pigs: <https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkit-resource/code-of-practice-feral-pigs/>
- Standard Operating Procedures: <https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkits/feral-pigs/>
 - [Trapping of feral pigs \(PIG 001\)](#)
 - [Ground shooting of feral pigs \(PIG 003\)](#)
 - [Poisoning of feral pigs with sodium fluoroacetate \(PIG 005\)](#)

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Photo supplied by PIRSA

