

Stakeholder forum – 30 August 2022

Response to questions

Q: How is data being collected on populations of pigs present and dispatched?

Scott Hardy (Whitsundays Regional Council) – We collect the number of dispatched pigs during the flight via a computer tablet. The population dispatched along the flight transect is converted to a flight quadrat or polygon to calculate area. This is then applied to the dispatched pig numbers to estimate feral pig density along the 400m wide flight path.

Marieke Jansen (Northern Biosecurity Group) – We use the eVorta Camera Network (60 active cameras throughout our region) to monitor pig activity and numbers. In January 2018, 33 static wildlife cameras were installed in 2 project areas that are being serviced every 9 weeks. From 2022, images are uploaded into eVorta to monitor feral pig activity in front of cameras. DPIRD have conducted two thermal surveys in the Northampton area. Results of this will be published by DPIRD very soon.

Q: As there is growth in participation for your aerial culling program, there are always stakeholders that are unhappy about how the programs are run and "do their own control work". Does your program exclude properties and landholdings that have not opted to contribute to the scheme or are these properties getting a free ride so to speak? or are they "no shoot zones"?

Scott Hardy – We don't shoot on properties who don't contribute. Sometimes landholders will "look over the fence" for a couple of years before they pay and participate.

Marieke Jansen – These properties are marked as no-shoot zones. We do approach the properties we would like to participate in the aerial cull. Not all properties contribute privately. Due to funding restrictions, we will be asking properties to contribute in the future. Aerial shooting currently only occurs in feral pig hotspots.

Q: How are pig populations being measured prior to and after control programs?

Scott Hardy – We only measure feral pig populations during the aerial shoots and then possibly annually during the annual report process. It is difficult to get an accurate picture of what the feral pig population is. We try and do the best we can with the time and resources available.

Marieke Jansen – The eVorta Camera network will monitor feral pig activity and count individual pigs. This year we have some baseline data from the Thermal Survey and we are hoping this can continue in 2023. The cost/pig has been calculated in our aerial shooting program over the past 5 years as \$26.00 /pig which is considered an efficient method (effectiveness can't be determined as yet).

Photo- Bren Fuller, Whitsunday Regional Council

