



Successful feral pig management programs have recently been delivered in locations in central Queensland where firearms are prohibited, illustrating how innovation and collaboration can overcome operational challenges. By working closely with landowners, managers, and neighbouring cattle stations, a comprehensive and effective approach to managing feral pig populations while enhancing safety and efficiency was delivered.

## Leveraging thermal drone surveys for strategic impact

A standout feature of these programs was the use of thermal drone surveys, conducted both before and after operations. These surveys provided valuable data on feral pig locations, movement pathways, and concentration hotspots, enabling heavily affected areas to be prioritised. This targeted approach reduced operational costs and ensured resources were deployed with maximum impact.

The post-program surveys also served as a critical evaluation tool, enabling reductions in feral pig populations to be quantified and reinforcing the effectiveness of the intervention to landholders and other stakeholders.

## Collaboration with landholders and stakeholders

Early engagement with neighbouring property owners was central to success. Strong relationships were fostered by seeking consent to operate on or over adjoining properties when needed. This enabled trust to be built and encouraged participation, with some stakeholders also contributing financially to the initiative.

This collaborative effort allowed for broader coverage, minimised gaps in control areas, and amplified overall impact.

## Positive stakeholder feedback

More than 1700 pigs were removed from several highly restricted-access locations. Six programs were conducted from October 2023 to September 2024 across 15,000-25,000 hectares. Aerial shooting was the primary management method used, supported by thermal ground shooting (conducted at night) and HOGGONE baiting.

Stakeholders highlighted the safety, efficiency, and

professionalism of the approaches used, and recognised the tangible benefits to land productivity and livestock protection resulting from the removal of feral pigs from the landscape.

The land area involved increased from 15,000 ha to 25,000 ha over the duration of this work, as a result of community engagement activities and involvement of additional land managers, primarily beef producers.

The Feral Counter app, used by NAILSMA and CSIRO to manage and record the abundance of feral animals in northern Australia, was utilised and enabled the number and locations of pigs to be captured during the control programs. It was estimated that 82% of the population was removed in this program. More information about this app will be provided in future newsletters.

## A model for future programs

This work demonstrated how data-driven strategies and stakeholder engagement can transform feral pig management, even in areas with regulatory constraints. By adopting innovative tools, including thermal drone surveys and monitoring apps, and fostering cooperative community relationships, safe, scalable and cost-effective feral pig control was achieved.

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*Thanks are extended to GreymanOPS for sharing their management approaches with the National Feral Pig Action Plan to highlight strategies employed in recent feral pig management efforts.*



*Aerial view of damage from feral pigs in a crop  
Photo supplied by GreymanOPS*