

The impact of Pests Animals on Agriculture

We think that the existing Australian and State Government processes need to be able to communicate and work together to help primary producer dispose of the feral animals that stray on to private land, this is mainly wild dogs and possibly wombats as the wombat opens up holes in the fences making a way for the other feral animals to enter.

It would be good if more funding was available to employ more dogman as well as train new and young dogman for the future. Since the fires, the dog problem has worsened, because there isn't enough wild animals in the bush for them to feed on. The dogs in the photo are dogs that have come on our property that we have shot and trapped since Jan 2004. They are inter-bred dogs with domestic dogs (deer shooting dogs that have been lost and left behind) which with their breeding program they have several litters of pups a year.

The Wild dogs are causing great concern physically, mentally and financially. Eighty per cent of our property was burnt out during the fire, then we had the drought and now we have this problem. We have never seen so many dogs around as long as we have lived.

From 1980 through to 2000 we used to run 8 to 10 thousand sheep. We destocked because of the ovine johnes was found in our flock. We are trying to build up our numbers of superfine merinos and are finding it extremely difficult. We were losing 100 joined ewes a month, these would be valued at \$100 each plus.

Last year the dogs got into our wethers and we lost half of the flock. The rest it took over six months to try and fatten them for sale, but it didn't happen because the sheep were highly stressed out.

Our neighbour on one side of us have totally destocked with sheep because the dog problem is so bad, so the dogs are travelling through their property to us. We are 5kms from crown land where the dogs are coming in. We are losing half a day either in work or wages just chasing dogs and this is making it hard to complete farm jobs such as fencing, feed animals and so on. Our property is mainly sheep country, so we need the input from the Department of Primary Industries in the dog baiting program and employing the dogman fulltime. The dogman that traps our area has caught fifty dogs since Early April. In the old Omeo shire so far this year the dogman have caught over 720 dogs.

When we muster cattle from our lease country, at night we have to keep our dogs in the hut with us, or lock them in the vehicle for their safety, as the wild dogs have been known to attack our dogs.

Our neighbour Tim Faithfull was away working for a couple of days and the wild dogs off Mt Sam attacked his dogs on the chain.

We feel that the Bushwalkers need to be made aware of the dog problem as I would guarantee you that if a bushwalker was to get injured, their life would be in danger, especially if they are walking on their own.

yours faithfully,
Rodger and Yvonne. Connley.