

As a person who in the past has spent a considerable amount of time in rural NSW and QLD, I have now drawn some strong opinions on why pest animals in these 2 states have been able to flourish.

The key points I would focus on are:

- Inept landholders
- Conservation groups empathizing with pest animals
- Criminal behaviour by some people claiming to help bring numbers down

Private landholders hold the majority of arable land therefore they are by default the biggest problem. Landholders must be held accountable, there was a time and possibly still is that you would find a collection of old but well used traps in the sheds of most farms. Not only did the pastoralist own these traps but had the skills and knowledge on how to effectively use them (dogs, foxes and rabbits). Suitable humane replacement traps are available (soft catch) and work correctly if set properly as does poison (baiting).

As somebody who spent time working on 3 large properties, you soon learn where feral animals like to frequent. Feral pigs are a good example of this behaviour solution, baiting and trapping but local knowledge is the key. I have seen results of successful baiting program 1080 but all adjoining properties must cooperate as one. Prosecution must follow if one or more landholders do not cooperate with a sustained effort.

Pigs by far are an easy animal to trap unfortunately there are a group of mostly men who take great satisfaction ensuring the survival and growth in numbers of feral pigs. Quite often these groups behaviour is criminal, with capture and release of pigs into areas where pigs have been controlled. The use of dogs only scatters the problem and only baiting will bring down numbers. So called pigging should be banned and made illegal as these dogs are dangerous to other domestic pets and small children.

To try and keep it short, the biggest problem of feral animals is foxes, rabbits & cats. This should be the focus of animal culling, yes total removal of these pests from our landscape is necessary, again by the means of trapping, baiting and bio control. The knowledge on how to successfully control and remove these pest animals is still out there, it's in the minds of the older generation of farmers. We just need to spread the knowledge, skills and means by training and educating the younger generation of landholders.