

# LESCHENAULT BIOSECURITY GROUP HOGGONE TRIAL- INITIAL FINDINGS

02/11/20

## OVERVIEW

### 1. Project Background and Description

Feral Pigs are a cause of serious agricultural and environmental damage within the Leschenault Biosecurity Group (LBG) operational area. After consultation with the community, Feral Pigs were identified as a priority species as a focus for project funding. Feral Pigs have a considerable impact on the environments in which they become established. There is also evidence that pigs spread *Phytophthora* (dieback). Pigs are also susceptible to several significant exotic diseases of livestock not yet present in Australia. It is important to manage feral pigs to prevent buildup of large numbers.

LBG undertook a trial of the newly registered (December 2019) HOGGONE® meSN® Feral Pig Bait and the HOGGONE® Bait Box to assess the effectiveness and suitability of the system for pig management within the LBG operational area. The trial took place on private property in the locality of Mumballup, within the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup.

### 2. Why trial HOGGONE?

HOGGONE® meSN® Sodium Nitrate baits are considered a humane form of control. The bait is an approved food preservative in low doses and eliminates pigs quickly as they lack an enzyme present in other fauna. The pigs expire from a lack of oxygen to the brain (methemoglobinemia) within 1-3 hours of ingestion. The carcasses pose no threat to scavenging fauna and the bait is presented in target specific boxes that prevent other fauna from accessing the bait. For more information on the HOGGONE system please visit; <https://animalcontrol.com.au/products/hoggone>

If deemed successful, this system would be an excellent humane destruction alternative to trapping, shooting or 1080 baiting, because:

- It does not require formal training or qualifications to purchase or use
- Threat of off target damage is very small
- Safe for operators (when used in alignment with manufacturers' instructions)
- Relatively low cost (Bait boxes can be shared)

### 3. Process

LBG Staff with the assistance of a contracted vertebrate pest specialist utilised the HOGGONE system as per all instructions from the manufacturer.

Date	Activity	Outcome
21/09/2020	Landowner contacted LBG with recent regular sightings of a group of 5 pigs	
27/09/2020	Site selected. Motion Sensor Cameras set up. 15kg Barley and Molasses placed on the ground as pre-feed	
02/10/2020	Bait boxes were placed on the ground. Pre-feed changed to fermented Barley and Molasses	To familiarise pigs with the boxes.
09/10/2020	5 pigs sighted on camera (each night from this day forward)	
10/10/2020	Pre-feed cleaned up off the ground. Pre-feed placed into bait boxes with lid set fully open.	
11/10/2020 – 16/10/2020	Pre-feed placed into bait boxes each night. -Two nights with lids fully open. -Two nights with lid half closed. -One night feed placed along rim of the box with lid closed. 1-2 trays of placebo placed within the boxes each night.	Both bait boxes empty every morning during this period
17/10/2020	Placebo trays placed in both bait boxes with no other pre-feed.	Fully consumed
18/10/2020	Treated Bait trays placed in both boxes. All pigs on camera feeding from both boxes	One box fully consumed, other box 40% consumed
19/10/2020	No carcasses found due to terrain and thick undergrowth. Bait boxes and remaining bait left as is. No pigs return to boxes overnight.	
20/10/2020	No pigs returned to the boxes overnight.	
21/10/2020	Three carcasses found 200m from Bait Box site, with no evidence of any pig activity.	Assumption that other 2 pigs deceased but not found.

#### 4. Notes

For analysis it may be important to note the following:

- Once the pigs 'discovered' the feeding site, they visited every night. The number of days of pre-feeding should be able to be reduced some-what significantly, however extra precaution was taken for this initial trial to ensure the pigs were not scared off by changes to the site and feed.
- The landscape and vegetation type around this site made locating the deceased pigs more difficult
- Only Magpies, Ravens and Kangaroos were seen on the trail cameras consuming the pre-feed. No animals (besides pigs) were seen attempting to open the hog boxes once closed.
- Only a total of 6 pigs were using this site. Amount of feed, placebo and bait, as well as how many boxes used, may need to be changed depending on pig numbers.
- The cameras were checked every morning, and feed/placebo/bait added each evening. Time spent on site each day was minimal and shared between LBG and the landowner.
- The pigs spent a varying amount of time at the feed boxes each night, but a significantly shorter period on the night when they consumed the bait. The five smaller pigs often fed first, with the larger boar visiting after. During pre-feeding, the pigs occasionally visited several times during the evening and night- spending up to an hour at the site. On the night where bait was consumed, the pigs spent only 23 minutes at the feed station and the large boar spent 14 minutes. None returned that night.

#### 5. Outcome

Six (6) pigs were recorded feeding from the Hog boxes, three of which were found deceased in close proximity to each other, 200m from the feed site. This suggests they succumbed to the bait quickly. The carcasses showed no signs of damage or distress. It is assumed the other 3 pigs were also deceased, as they did not return to the feed site on the following two nights.

No other fauna was affected by the trial.

Trial deemed a success.

A second trial in a different location will follow as soon as a suitable situation permits.

## 6. Feedback

The following feedback was provided to the manufacturer and included in this document to assist other land managers when considering utilising this system.

- There is no differentiation between the bait and placebo trays, once put into the hog boxes. Thus, when doing a search of the area post-baiting, we were unsure whether trays carried away from the site were placebo or bait trays.
- Trays carried away by the pigs may not always be found. Environmental concern with plastic pollution.
- Some difficulty securing the boxes to the ground to prevent them tipping. Star pickets were used in this trial, but this may not work in some ground conditions.
- No information given on the manufacturer's instructions on carcass disposal. Recommendations for the public may be beneficial.

## 8. Further Information.

For further information, or to access images of the site, please contact the LBG Project Officer at [info@lbginc.org.au](mailto:info@lbginc.org.au) or call 0488 021 344

Report approved by: Ange Pusey- LBG Executive Officer Date: 02/11/2020

9. Appendix

Image 1: Location of Hog boxes and carcasses



Image 2: Feral Pigs at the HOGGONE bait box site.

