

PIGOUT® edges closer to registration

ACTA receives many queries about the arrival date for PIGOUT® baits but can now say the lengthy APVMA regulatory process is near its end.

ACTA Managing Director Professor Linton Staples said the research team was surprised by the longer than normal regulatory delays.

"One of the outcomes of the 1080 review was a recommendation to accelerate the development of more target specific baits for feral pigs such as PIGOUT® now the R&D is done the approval is slow," he said.

"Fortunately, despite the two year delays, the registration process is now almost completed and we are progressing to the final label approvals and

a detailed technical booklet developed with reference to an expert panel is also ready to go to press," Prof Staples said.

He explained there is a three month period for final label certification and gazetting.

"All things considered, if all goes smoothly from here, we hope to have product available in early 2008."



Prototype PIGOUT® Baits

He said the lengthy PIGOUT® registration process is illustrative of the difficulty being experienced in bringing new products to rural communities in a cost-effective manner.

"Regulatory compliance is one of the biggest costs which most landholders do not understand in relation to final product pricing," he said.



Prototype PIGOUT® Baits have been trialled in many locations across Australia

Team approach a feature of PIGOUT® development

The PIGOUT® Project is a strong partnership between the R&D efforts of ACTA and Dr Steven Lapidge, Dr Simon Humphrys and Dr Brendan Cowled at the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC), and with strong in kind support from many government departments and agencies in most states.

With financial support from Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd (MLA), and through the Federal National Feral Animal Control Program administered by the Bureau of Resource Sciences, and Wildlife Exotic Disease Preparedness Program (WEDPP), the R&D group have developed the relatively species-specific bait as a better method of feral pig control.

"The motto of the IA-CRC is 'together, create and apply solutions' and this approach was a key factor in the success of PIGOUT® development," Prof Staples said.

For more information regarding PIGOUT® Feral Pig Bait please contact ACTA or the Adelaide Office of the IA-CRC.



Feral pigs captured eating PIGOUT® Baits with a remote sensing camera during the extensive trials.

The feral species problem is much bigger than most of us realise.

Like many around me, I have often said that the European rabbit is perhaps the most devastating vertebrate pest in Australia, simply because of its potential to erupt into vast numbers and affect vast areas.

Anyone who becomes complacent since the success of myxoma virus and rabbit haemorrhagic disease will rue the day that they rely only on these two remarkably specific bio-control options. There is little chance of a third bio-control for this pest but the present viruses are not eradicating the pest.

It seems a matter of time before resistance builds or the viruses attenuate to give an inevitable return to the catastrophic problems of the mid 1900's.

Close behind the rabbit in terms of serious impact is the European red fox, due to its ability to prey on a wide range of defenceless native and farm animals.

There is no doubt that the loss of most of the wildlife from mainland Australia is due to the insidious impact of this capable predator.

More recently, arising from our work with the IA-CRC we have come to better appreciate the adverse environmental impact of the feral pig. Its tremendous breeding capacity and its potential to provide one of the most serious disease transmission/amplification vectors in northern regions, makes this pest animal a high priority target for control.

An outbreak of rabies, Japanese encephalitis or FMD in Australia would surely help many to see the importance of effective controls for wild dogs, foxes and feral pigs.

Plague mice might not always be present but if they mass there is colossal damage to crops and an unrecognised impact on the seed banks for native plant species.

It would seem that we have our hands full with these pests, but my eyes were opened to a much greater problem when I read Tim Low's excellent book 'Feral Future'.

The book is a brilliant compilation of the history and impact of a wide range of introduced plant and animal species in Australia. It is an easy read but this belies a masterly assembly of facts and opinion.

Tim categorises the massive problem of invasive plants (many brought in for ornamental purposes), escaped mammals, reptiles and birds, insects, spiders, star fish, toads, diseases and fungi.

I must confess that I have sometimes been a cynical observer of the quarantine processes for travellers, but after reading Tim's book I have a greater understanding of, and deeper respect for, the enormous job done by our border protection agencies.



The European red fox, due to its ability to prey on a wide range of defenceless native and farm animals is a real threat.

Tim acknowledges that "foxes are probably the greatest blight on our smaller mammals especially numbats, bettongs and rock wallabies. They sometimes attack platypuses, tortoises, penguins and broilga chicks as well and they spread around the seeds of olives and blackberries." However, he also states prophetically that "the rabbits, toads and foxes we hear so much about are just the tip of a vast and unmeasured iceberg, one so dangerous it may one day sink our economy by destroying our crops, forest and fisheries." He raises the concept of the eventual decline of species diversity as we know it, so that future generations live in a universally uniform 'homocene' consisting of a limited number of highly successful (mostly invasive) animal and plant species.

It is a scary thought! In a despairing look forward he rightly emphasises the need for better education of future generations as to the problems. He alludes to the increasing skill shortages

"We desperately need more field workers to interpret the changes taking place, to spot new pests and new problems, to recognise that first bitou seedling on the beach".

He argues that "biological pollution, because it spreads and multiplies, is arguably more harmful than industrial pollution."

This is an interesting concept and it may help us all to consider our work on vertebrate pests and a kind of pollution prevention exercise.

Feral Future is a book for everyone who would like to consider the big invasive problems of Australia. Though first published in 1999, Tim advises me that copies of the book are still available from Penguin Books. If you need motivation as to the importance of your own efforts this book is a 'must read'.

Professor Linton Staples
Managing Director

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RATTOFF® ZP to protect Bananas & Macadamias



Having proven successful for the control of rats in sugarcane, RATTOFF® ZP Sachets are being keenly sought after as a legal control option for other crops including macadamias and bananas.

RATTOFF® Zinc Phosphide Bait Sachets have been available under a permit to macadamia growers to help control the rats in their crops until 1 February 2008.

ACTA's R&D Manager Michelle Smith explained that trials were underway in bananas and macadamia crops to extend the RATTOFF® ZP range of crops

"The macadamia and banana industries have applied for APVMA permits for their crops while we conduct the necessary trials," she said.

"The trials are currently underway for the Banana Industry, and it is hoped that the APVMA will grant producers the necessary registrations to enable these farmers to save their crops from rat damage," she said.

Why is RATTOFF® suitable for in-crop use?

She explained one of the main benefits of RATTOFF® ZP is the greatly reduced risk of secondary poisoning of non-target animals and total lack of environmental residues.

"RATTOFF® ZP is ingested by the rat, the zinc phosphide in the bait reacts with the stomach acid and is converted to minute concentrations of toxin internally," she said.

"The rats quickly succumb to heart and respiratory failure and usually go to their nests to die."

Michelle said unlike second generation anticoagulant poisons that persist in the carcass, the RATTOFF® toxins quickly degrade in the carcass so the risk of poisoning another animal is much reduced.

"Birds of prey have little risk of being poisoned with RATTOFF®, unlike the higher risk second-generation anticoagulants - which are not approved for use in macadamia or banana crops due to their potential for secondary poisoning and 'bio-accumulation'."

Industry trials

Michelle explained the breakthrough with RATTOFF® ZP is it's mode of action as a fast acting or 'acute' rodenticide and its ability to control a high proportion of rats in a crop within a few days of application.

"An acute rodenticide means the poison controls the rodents within a few hours after being eaten compared to traditional anticoagulant poisons that may take up to a week for a rat to succumb – during which time they are still gnawing at the crop."

"With the necessary permits in place, growers now have a legal option for controlling rats in their crops that will not risk the environment."

RATTOFF® Economics

ACTA's Marketing Manager Paul Crock explained that now permits were in place for Macadamia and Banana crops farmers had access to the most effective, legal and cost-effective rat control for their crops.

"The mis-use of anticoagulants in crops has been costing farmers far more than they think," Paul said.

"With RATTOFF® ZP Sachets, the cost per hectare is around \$30/ha compared to \$100 or more/ha using brodifacoum blocks."

He explained that not only was this a cost on the farmers, but the secondary poisoning risks to the birds of prey and anything else eating rat carcasses was a hidden cost to the environment.

Cost for baiting with anticoagulant blocks:

Bananas:

3 blocks every 10m	300 blocks/ha.
425 blocks/8.5kg tub	0.70 tubs/ha
\$150.00 ex gst/tub	\$105.00/ha

Macadamias:

266 trees per ha bait every second tree	
2 blocks/tree x 133 trees	266 blocks/ha.
425 blocks/8.5kg tub	0.63 tubs/ha
\$150.00 ex gst/tub	\$93.88/ha

Note: Using anticoagulant baits such as Tomcat & Storm in crops is illegal.

Cost for baiting with RATTOFF:

Sugarcane, Bananas & Macadamias.

1000 sachets/10kg pail	
100 sachets/ha	0.1 pail/ha
\$300 ex gst/pail	\$30.00/ha

For technical or trade enquiries please contact Animal Control Technologies: enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au



RATTOFF® ZP Sachets will be available to Banana growers this season under APVMA minor-use permit.

New rules give Victorians better access to 1080

From January 1 2008, Victorian Landholders who hold a 1080 endorsement to their Agricultural Chemicals Users Permit (ACUP) will be able to purchase FOXOFF® and other ACTA products containing 1080 over the counter at leading rural merchant stores across Victoria.

Welcoming the Victorian Department of Primary Industries' move to allow better access to FOXOFF® and 1080-based products such as RABBAIT® 1080 Oat Bait, ACTA's Managing Director Professor Linton Staples explained this commonsense decision enables farmers to access tools that can radically improve farm productivity and profitability.

"FOXOFF® was developed to help Australian farmers and land managers deal with the problem of the Fox," he said.

"Over the last 15 years, we have commonly seen productivity increases anywhere from 10 – 50% in lamb marking percentages following successful fox baiting programs - some farmers have commented that the improved lambing percentages after effective fox control helped save their farms."

Prof. Staples explained that in recent years access to FOXOFF® was difficult as the number of DPI depots or locations had been reduced and operating hours restricted.

"In a bold and positive move to redress this problem and to encourage a larger effort to manage Victoria's foxes more effectively, FOXOFF® will be available from approved rural merchants," he said.

"ACTA is now able to offer FOXOFF® and RABBAIT® 1080 Oat bait for sale through our existing distribution channels alongside our other successful vertebrate pest control products"

"With the changes to the legislation surrounding the distribution of 1080, ACTA is now able to offer FOXOFF® and RABBAIT® 1080 Oat bait for sale through our existing distribution channels alongside our other successful vertebrate pest control products including RABBAIT® Pindone Oat Bait and MOUSEOFF® Zinc Phosphide bait."

"Several hundred trained rural merchant agronomists can now, for the first time, directly assist in the management of these important pests," he said.

This new approach will be closely monitored and has the potential to enable a much more pro-active approach to fox control programs.



1080 Endorsement Training

While the ACUP process was slow to be adopted in the wool sector, the number of graziers with ACUP's is up and many have undertaken the 1080 endorsement training offered free by the Department.

"In order to maximise safety and best practice approach, the Department has offered free 1080 endorsement training to 4500 farmers to help them better understand the risks associated with 1080 use, and what their requirements will be under the new system."

Purchasing Requirements

Under the new regulations, any person over the age of 18 who holds an ACUP with the necessary 1080 endorsement will be able to purchase FOXOFF® from rural resellers.

ACTA's Sales Manager Mark Osborne explained that the process for landholders was very simple and a great improvement on the existing onerous procedures.

"From January 1 landholders will be able to conveniently purchase their baits at any time that suits them from their local rural reseller rather than DPI offices," he said.

"After they have completed a risk self-assessment of their property, presented their 1080-endorsed ACUP and a signed 'Bait User Declaration Form' to the accredited or authorised reseller, they are able to purchase their baits immediately."

He explained that the risk self-assessment is aimed at identifying and evaluating potential risks to the environment and off-target species associated with the proposed use of 1080.

"Each site is subject to an objective assessment of the issues and risks to determine whether 1080 baiting is the best control method and, if 1080 is appropriate, what actions need to be taken to use the product safely," he said.



Lamb losses and the true scale of the fox problem is often underestimated. Over the last 15 years increases lamb marking percentages of 5-20% have been common with some higher than 50%.

He explained that the risk assessments did not have to be presented when purchasing FOXOFF® or RABBAIT® 1080 Oats at the rural reseller store, but that landholders were obliged to keep a copy for their records.

"I believe that Victorian farmers should be happy with this greatly simplified process," Mark said.

Other bait types

In other developments under the sweeping 1080 changes, other bait substrates will now be available for fox and wild dog control in Victoria.

Prof. Staples explained that under previous legislation, ACTA was not permitted to produce a bait manufactured out of liver, but the new arrangements the company can now

also provide cooked liver baits to those who require them.

"FOXOFF® is much cleaner and simpler to use than the cooked liver baits, however we have developed a method to deliver these perishable baits through the rural merchant or to professional licenced contractors as an option for Victorian farmers," he said.

Unlike FOXOFF® the liver baits will be perishable and the new regulations require that they be used within 48 hrs of purchase.

He said that if farmers (or contractors) wanted the baits, they would be made to demand and delivered just in time to ensure their freshness.



Shelf-stable RABBAIT® 1080 Oat Bait soon available through leading rural merchants in Victoria.

"As leaders in the broadacre vertebrate pest control field, we are pleased to offer a full range of 1080 options for farmers and land managers through our distribution partners in Victoria."

ACTA will also make 1080 Concentrate available only to contractors authorised for manufacturing fresh carrot and liver baits.

For more information regarding FOXOFF® and RABBAIT® 1080 changes in Victoria contact enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au



The new 1080 regulations will allow Victorians to access shelf-stable RABBAIT® 1080 Oat Bait from leading rural merchants for use in areas where 1080 use is appropriate.

Southern Ark shows impact of FOXOFF®

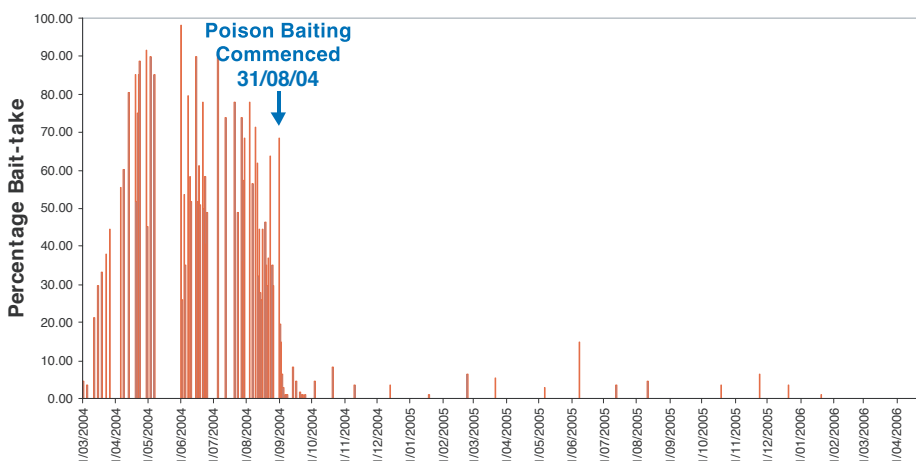
The Southern Ark project headed by Andy Murray of DSE Victoria seeks to reduce fox numbers to protect native species and stock in the far eastern corner of Victoria.

The program has monitored bait stations throughout a large area (see map) and is using FOXOFF® for most operations. A recent newsletter showed the high rate of unpoisoned free feed uptake at monitored stations and how this crashes once the switch to poison baits is made.



Bait-take graph showing dramatic decline after poison bait introduction

Bait take in the Orbost 'Staff Training Area'



This is a great indication of how dramatically the FOXOFF® poison baits can reduce fox numbers in this region and confirms the many early research assessments of FOXOFF® efficacy over many years.

Despite this type of data, some farmers still believe that only fresh liver baits will work.

Recognising this, DPI Victoria is introducing a permit system to enable preparation and sale of perishable baits.

ACTA expects to be able to supply short shelf life (perishable) cooked liver baits for fox control as an additional option for farmers and government programs from early 2008.

Source: DSE The Ark June 2007

Date

Queensland Shires flying high with DOGGONE®

In one of Queensland's largest aerial baiting programs, 1.8 million hectares of the Flinders Shire in outback Queensland has been treated using DOGGONE® Wild Dog Baits.

Shane Rogers, Flinders Shire Land Protection Officer, explained the ratepayers had agreed to use DOGGONE® in their aerial campaigns over a two-year period to compare the results against their traditional wet meat baiting campaigns.

"Landholders have mixed feelings about the move to DOGGONE®, some prefer the old wet meat baits, while others are happy with trying out the new baits," he said.

He said there was still a large ground-baiting program that involved the use of DOGGONE® and fresh meat baits to give ratepayers the choice, but that the aerial campaigns had switched to DOGGONE®.

"9% of the shire is still ground baited using a mix of fresh meat or DOGGONE®," Shane said.

The cost of meat baiting

One of the biggest benefits of moving to DOGGONE® for their aerial campaigns has been the massive saving in aircraft flying time and labour.

"As the ratepayers in the shire pay a wild dog levy, the switch to DOGGONE® has meant their contribution can go a lot further," Shane said.

He explained that the plane contracted to conduct the baiting had a payload of 270kg limiting them to carrying about 1,000 250g meat baits.

This payload limitation impacted on the cost of the aerial program. He said that the flying time spent dropping the baits – the baiting runs - amounted to 40 minutes, but the ferrying time to and from the airport to pick up the next load of baits often took 60 minutes or more.

"With DOGGONE®, we fit nearly 4,000 baits in the plane, and each run takes 3 – 4 hours before returning to fill up with baits again."

"Using DOGGONE® in our aerial campaign has meant we cover the shire in 2.5 days compared to meat baits which could take at least five days to cover the same area."

He said this equated to at least a \$10,000 saving in budget for the plane, but also halved the labour costs.

According to Shane, accessing large quantities of meat in his area was not easy,

which meant they had to rely on frozen product shipped in from other parts of the state.

"Firstly we need a freezer/portable coolroom to keep the meat from going off, but the problem we then have is to thaw out thousands of kilograms of meat or offal without the crows and birds of prey coming in and eating them," he said.

To minimise the ferrying time the baiting crew had to move around the shire and use different station airstrips. Due to the vast distances in the shire, this often meant the teams were required to camp out on site.

"Once the baits are thawed, we have to cart the meat out to the strips in a portable coolroom, typically at least 1.5 hours away from the base."

He said typically the meat baits would be injected on the strip and loaded straight into the aircraft for the baiting runs.

"With DOGGONE® two of us do everything from the Hughenden airport, no cost of coolrooms, no camping out, and a massive saving in plane time labour costs," Shane said.

The vast distances, property sizes and rugged terrain in Queensland mean aerial baiting programs are a necessary option.



"There are still a number of holes in the blanket in terms of the aerial baiting areas, but many of these landholders use trapping and shooting to try and keep their wild dog numbers down."

Whether the shire chooses to use meat or DOGGONE® baits, shooting or trapping, Shane concluded that the reality was they were never going to eradicate wild dogs from the shire and the best they could hope for was to control numbers and minimise impact on the farming operations.

For more information about the Flinders Shire Wild Dog Control Program, contact Shane Rogers: shaner@flinders.qld.gov.au



The DOGGONE Wild Dog Bait range includes 300 bait tubs, 'Farmpacks' of 72 baits and trays of 12 baits

The shire aims to control wild dog numbers to minimise their impact on the cattle farming operations

Participation

Shane said that the landholder participation in the wild dog control program was very good, but there were still a number of landholders reluctant to use 1080 on their properties.

DOGGONE®

Booklet available

A technical booklet is available to help farmers and land managers get a better understanding of the problems they face from wild dogs, and methods to assist them control the problem.

Published by Animal Control Technologies the booklet has been prepared with input and revisions by senior members of state agencies responsible for management of wild dogs in most states and territories.

ACTA Marketing Manager Paul Crock explained that case studies and images have been sourced from around Australia, and reflect the nature and severity of the problem posed by wild dogs.

"The problem of wild dogs appears to be increasing in many parts of Australia, especially in areas where feral domestic dogs are interbreeding with dingoes and other cross bred dogs."

"The booklet contains case studies across sheep and cattle industries, as well as examples of control programs in national parks."

He explained the booklet aims to help landholders learn more about wild dogs, their biology, integrated methods for control, and technical information about DOGGONE® Wild Dog bait.

"It is designed to alert people to DOGGONE® baits as a clean, simple and efficient alternative to fresh meat baits, and to give Land Protection Officers a tool to help lift the awareness of community coordinated baiting programs".



For a free copy of the DOGGONE® Booklet write to: Animal Control Technologies PO Box 379 Somerton Victoria 3062. or email: enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au

ACTA Workshop for NSWP&WS at Lismore

Foxes are a continuing problem on Northern regions of NSW, as elsewhere, but in closely settled areas like the small farmlets and coastal towns around Ballina and Lismore, the use of 1080 baits is not always possible. In these areas the Department of Environment and Climate Change has adopted den fumigation as a preferred option in some sites.



“Our tests showed the cartridges produced 70% carbon monoxide in the smoke, which after dilution into an experimental “den” of 1100 litre volume, resulted in final carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations of around 3-6%,”

“This concentration of CO is lethal to any foxes present in the den,” he said.

Humaneness

Professor Staples said that the mode of action of carbon monoxide was the most humane method of control.

“The animals in the den are quickly overcome with the gas, falling to sleep and peacefully slipping into unconsciousness and death.

He explained that it is very simple control method, but stressed that carbon monoxide gas must be treated with respect and care.

“Even low concentrations of CO will produce unconsciousness and death, so it is important to follow the approved usage instructions for this technology and use great care to avoid exposure to the smoke, especially if in any confined space,” he said.

After the presentations, participants joined in practical den fumigation demonstrations in sensitive dune country near the coast at Ballina.

In order to establish correct usage procedures for DEN-CO-FUME, ACTA Managing Director Professor Linton Staples was invited to run a training workshop for contactors and Department of Environment staff at the NPWS regional headquarters at Alstonville near Lismore northern NSW.

The workshop discussed fox biology, fox control with FOXOFF baits, FERALMONE fox and dog attractant, and highlighted the optimum safe use of the DEN-CO-FUME for controlling foxes in natal dens.

Professor Staples explained that ACTA first tested DEN-CO-FUME carbon monoxide fumigant cartridges as a fox control option with the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment in a BRS-supported research program in 1995.

“The technique was first used by the USDA on various burrowing pests in the USA (including foxes and coyotes) and is well proven to be highly effective.”



Fumigating fox dens with Den-CO-Fume® is a simple and effective fox control method.

Rommel is not the only ‘desert fox’

We hear much about the recent incursion of foxes into our last bastion of wildlife preservation in Tasmania, but this may not be the only area of concern right now.

A recent ABC news article (Oct 4th) described the destruction of fox cubs at the Blina Mine site, some 80km from Derby in the Pilbera region of Western Australia.

The WA Dept of Conservation & Wildlife Management acted quickly to remove this active den, but were quoted as believing "it is unlikely that the vermin would survive long term in the hot climate".

Prof. Linton Staples has recently returned from the Middle East where red foxes and sand foxes living in desert conditions have been found to be a predator of the iconic Houbara Bustard.

In a program involving the Al Ain Zoo, an 850 hectare desert wildlife park undergoing a major redevelopment and the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi in the UAE, FOXOFF® is being used to quell the problem.



A fox which was found in the baiting area near Jebel Hafeet, UAE.

We have all been perhaps complacent that the fox in Australia is restricted to southern temperate latitudes. This may not be the case given the middle east problem and the known impact of foxes on endangered species such as Yellow-footed rock wallabies under arid conditions in SA or the discovery of foxes threatening turtle nest sites near Rockhampton in Qld. (Described in previous ACTA Updates).

Foxes appear to be still colonising mainland Australia!



Professor Linton staples addresses the group of NPWS rangers.

Snap-E Traps a real pain in the neck

The MOUSEOFF® and RATTOFF® Snap-E Traps have proven an incredibly popular addition to the domestic and industrial rodent control range.

Territory Manager Barry James explained that most of the customers he has dealings with were apprehensive at first about the new traps, but quickly embraced the technology.



The new display shippers for RATTOFF® and MOUSEOFF® Snap-E Traps are proving very popular.

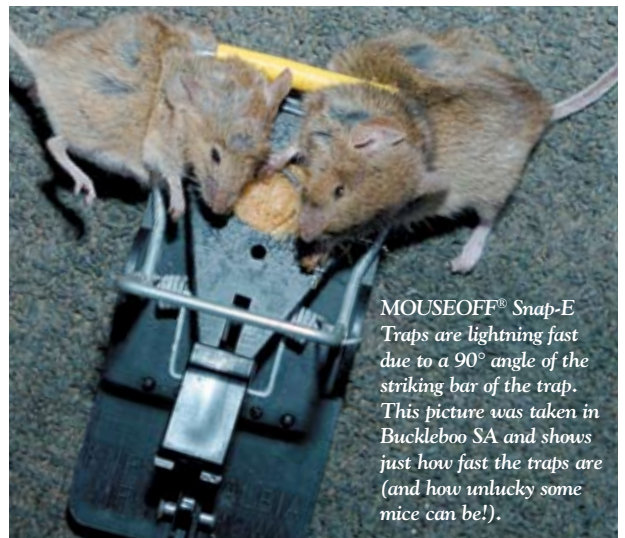
He said that many people had complained the cheaper alternatives easily broke or did not go off at all even though the bait was taken.

“Although Snap-E traps are dearer than some, customers have welcomed the reliability and re-useable features of the Snap-E traps.”

Barry said one of the great selling features of the trap was that once the mouse (or rat) was caught, disposing of the carcass was easy.

“Unlike other traps, the Snap-E traps mechanism allows you to dispose of the mouse or rat quickly and simply without touching it.”

“This is particularly attractive to female customers who have often thrown the trap in the bin - mouse and all - rather than try and extract the dead rodent,” he said.



MOUSEOFF® Snap-E Traps are lightning fast due to a 90° angle of the striking bar of the trap. This picture was taken in Buckleboo SA and shows just how fast the traps are (and how unlucky some mice can be!).

MOUSEOFF® ZP In-crop mouse monitoring kits

In response to requests for more information about monitoring, ACTA has prepared a monitoring kit to assist farmers and agronomists identify mice problems.



Presented in a small tub, the kit contains:

- 10 new MOUSEOFF® Snap-E traps;
- A tub of peanut butter to bait the traps;
- 3x30 page pads of canola soaked bait cards;
- 10 x MOUSEOFF® monitoring pins (480mm) to hold & identify bait cards in the crop;
- 1 x small bottle of talc powder for checking hole activity;
- 1 x MOUSEOFF® ZP Technical Booklet;
- 1 x MOUSEOFF® ZP Technical DVD;

These kits are now available at cost from ACTA. For more information call (03) 9308 9688 enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au

He said the Snap-E traps were clean and simple to use and proved highly effective.

“The setting of the traps was clean and quick - it took half the time it used to - and with no risk of getting fingers caught in the process.”

“What’s more, we trapped rats, mice, toads that set off the hair-pin trigger.”

“They are great traps and I would recommend them to anyone,” Brad said.

These kits are now available at cost from ACTA. For more information call (03) 9308 9688

Snap-E In-crop Rat Monitoring



The robust nature of the RATTOFF® Snap-E traps makes them suitable for use both indoors and even for use out in crops as a monitoring tool.

Since last year, the MOUSEOFF® ZP In-Crop Monitoring kits have proven very popular.

This year, following success in monitoring rats in sugarcane, the RATTOFF® In-crop monitoring kits have been released.

The Burdekin Productivity Services Brad Woodford, was the first to adopt the new RATTOFF® Snap-E Traps in their in-crop monitoring.

He explained that the in-crop rat monitoring involved running trap lines in the crops and along perimeters to check for the presence of rats.

“Setting the old traps was messy business and finger-grabbing gamble.”

He said they had to soak cardboard in oil and attached them to the traps before trying to set them.

“It was like playing Russian Roulette - you wouldn’t know whether the traps would go off in your hand.”

“After all the effort of setting them and laying out the lines, it was hard to catch things in the old traps - some didn’t even go off!”, he said.

He was very impressed with the new RATTOFF® Snap-E traps.

“They are 100% better than the old wooden traps.”



Landcarers carpet foxes to save native python

The Warby range Landcare Group, Parks Victoria and the Department of Primary Industries at Benalla have joined forces to protect an endangered species of native carpet python from fox predation.

Past research revealed that foxes predate heavily upon the python so a fox baiting program was conducted to alleviate pressure on the Carpet Python, as well as benefiting biodiversity and lamb production in the Chesney area.

In 2006 the program achieved a 34% reduction of fox numbers in the area and local farmers reported a 10-15% increase in lambing numbers due to the baiting.

Under the Project, landholders gain their Farm Chemical Users Certificate

Course and the Agricultural Chemical Users Permit (ACUP), and received assistance in devising bait station maps and get their baits at no cost.

The program increased the number of landholders with 1080 endorsed ACUP permits to use baits from 22 to a total of 62 in 2007, with all but one permit holder participating in the baiting over the 43,000ha control area.

This increased participation arose from regular interactions with landholders. The first interaction was at the course, the second during a personal property visit to the landholder to organise the location of the bait stations, the third during the bait pick-up morning where the landholder collected the number of baits they required.

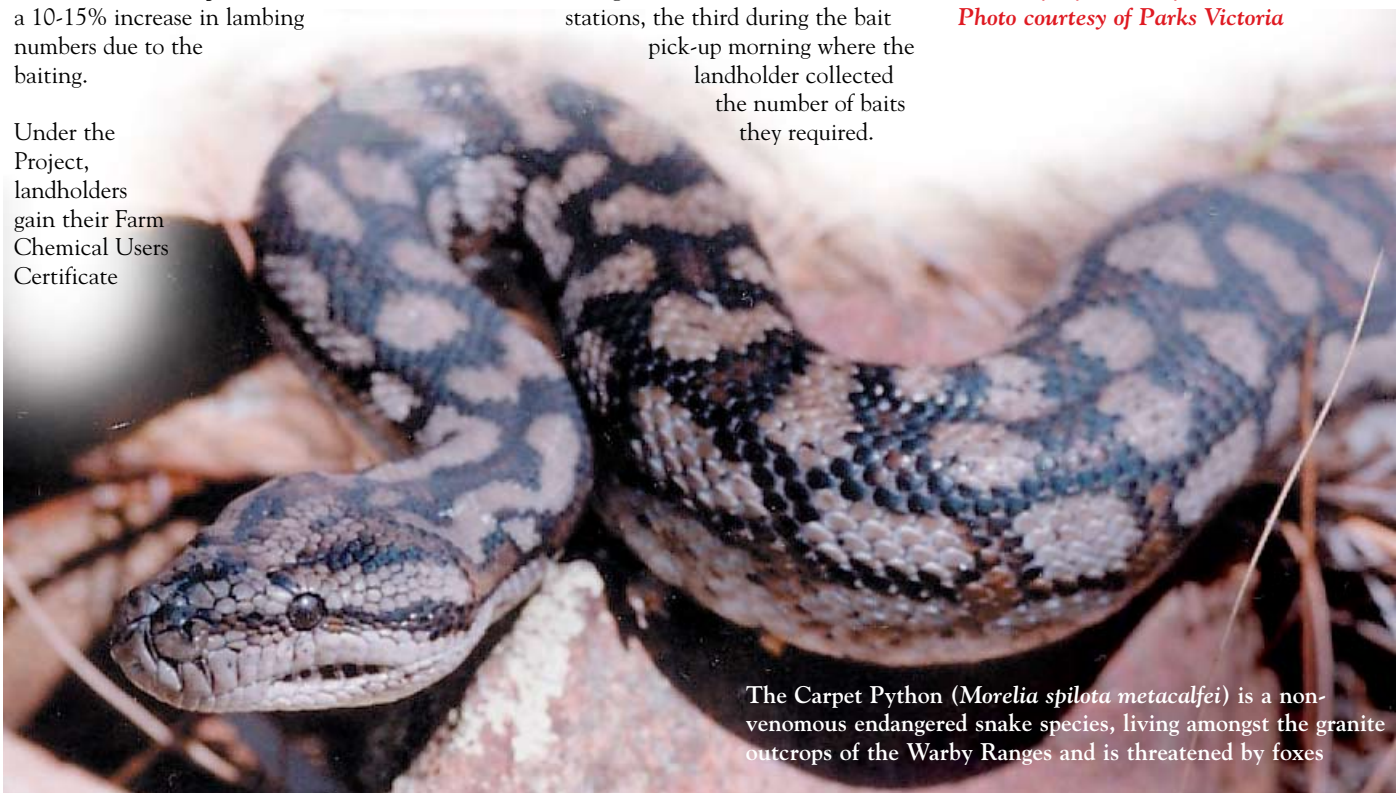
The fourth get together was during a morning event where landholders had the opportunity to bring back any unused baits for disposal.

A 'Fox Bait Breakfast' was held in 2007 at the Thoona Hotel to discuss the project with neighbours.

Janice Mentiplay-Smith, who coordinated the program, said "These positive meetings and regular project feedback resulted in further discussions of conservation covenants and Whole Farm Plans with long term benefits to participants."

"The baiting program achieved a 34% reduction of fox numbers in the area and local farmers reported a 10-15% increase in lambing numbers."

The program is set to continue in 2008. Contact: Janice Mentiplay-Smith DPI Benalla for further information Photo courtesy of Parks Victoria



The Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota metacalfei*) is a non-venomous endangered snake species, living amongst the granite outcrops of the Warby Ranges and is threatened by foxes



RABBAIT® 1080 Oat Bait available OTC in Victoria

RABBAIT® 1080 Oat Bait has been available for some years with farmers and land managers in the Victoria having used the product when the Victorian Department moved away from preparing 1080 carrot baits.

After a couple of seasons, feedback has been very positive as landholders see first-hand that oats can provide a simple and shelf-stable control option for rabbits.

In some areas there is still strong demand for the reintroduction of fresh carrots.

With the changes to the distribution arrangements for 1080 products, RABBAIT 1080 Oat Bait will be available OTC through leading rural merchant stores, while carrots will be available through leading contractors.

The pricing of RABBAIT 1080 Oat bait will be different as in the past the government heavily subsidised the true cost of the product.

For more information about RABBAIT® 1080 Oat bait please contact ACTA: enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au

The Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby bounces back after fox control

This year celebrates the tenth anniversary of the release of yellow-footed rock wallabies *Petrogale xanthopus xanthopus* back into the wild at Aroona Sanctuary, in the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia.

Lindell Andrews, Animal Records Officer with the Adelaide Zoo, and Zoos SA Co-ordinator of the Leigh Creek Conservation Projects, explained that rock wallabies disappeared from Aroona Dam in 1983, and today, the yellow-footed rock wallaby is classified as Vulnerable through the IUCN.

"Historical data suggests that there has been a decline in yellow-footed rock wallaby numbers since early European settlement."

"This decline is largely due to competition with introduced herbivores (rabbits), and through predation by introduced predators, primarily foxes," she said.

In 1996, in a collaborative effort by Zoos South Australia, ETSA (now Flinders Power), assisted by the Department of Environment and Heritage, Taronga Zoo and Melbourne Zoo, ten yellow-footed rock wallabies were released at Aroona Sanctuary. The following year saw two more released.

"In 1998, with the financial assistance of Leigh Creek School, three tracking stations were erected, allowing animals fitted with radio collars to be monitored, and the success of the population to be established," Lindell said.

"Since 2001, monitoring of the population has continued through a partnership involving Zoos South Australia, Conservation Volunteers of Australia (CVA)

and Flinders University, supported by invaluable assistance from Flinders Power and the Leigh Creek community."

Lindell explained that in 2006, rock wallaby numbers had climbed to about 41 at Aroona Sanctuary.

"The success of the population is largely due to the integrated feral animal control program implemented by Flinders Power and Zoos South Australia, and surrounding landowners and pastoralists," Lindell said.

"The main focus of the program was on fox baiting in the sanctuary and surrounding district using FOXOFF® Econobaits," She said.

Lindell explained that the regular baiting program with FOXOFF® is proving to be very effective in controlling fox and feral cat numbers, but to keep the predators at bay, the integrated control program involved additional shooting and trapping as required.

"This collaborative effort, supported by funding from the Aroona Catchment Biodiversity Enhancement Project (ACBEP), has resulted in a 20km buffer zone around the sanctuary where the presence and impacts of feral animals has been significantly reduced," Lindell said.

"The long-term management of Aroona Sanctuary, with particular regard to its successful control of

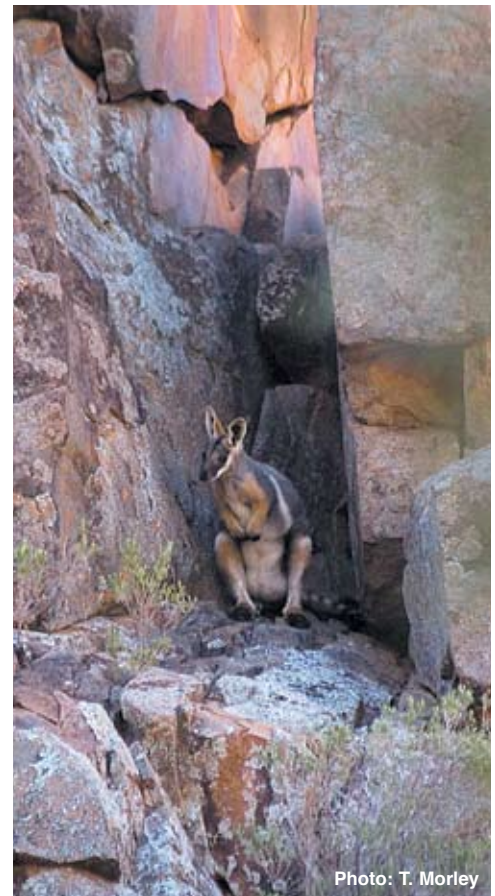


Photo: T. Morley

An agile yellow-footed rock wallaby shelters in a crevice in the face of a cliff at Aroona Sanctuary. feral animals, has opened up the potential of re-introducing more species into the region," she said.

Zoos South Australia, in collaboration with Flinders Power, Flinders University and the Department of Environment and Heritage are currently exploring other conservation initiatives.

For more information about the Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Project please contact Lindell Andrews landrews@zoossa.com.au

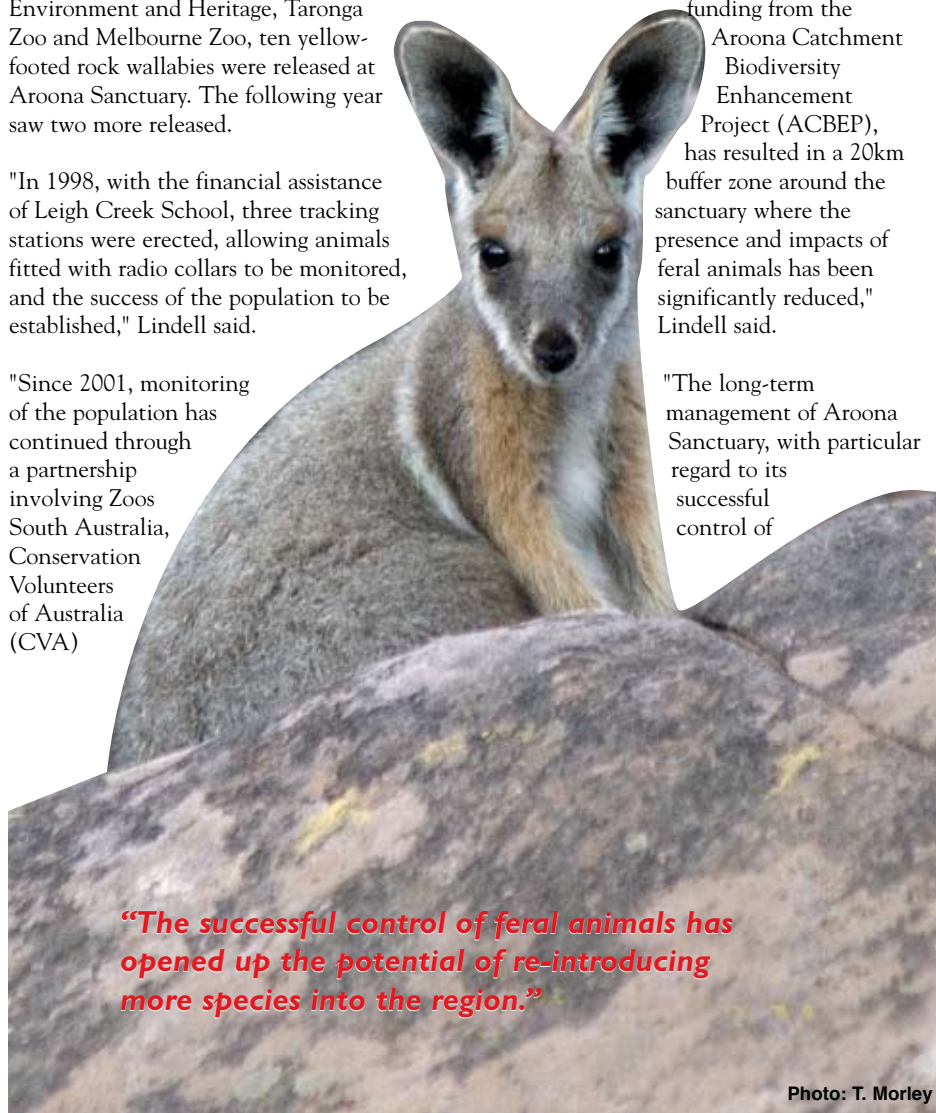


Photo: T. Morley

"The successful control of feral animals has opened up the potential of re-introducing more species into the region."



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R&D Team progresses rodent research

The R&D arm of Animal Control Technologies, Applied Biotechnologies is working hard with collaboration from the University of Queensland to find improved methods for rodent management in several situations.



“The establishment of a buffer zone around the plant using MOUSEOFF® ZP resulted in the best ever reduction of mouse numbers and of stock damage in the warehouse after four years of monitoring. “



The R&D team are looking at new applications of existing proven technologies for rodent control.

The project is in partnership with the Invasive Animals CRC and has received support and encouragement from several industry groups.



MOUSEOFF ZP in Horticultural Crops

ACTA Rodent Research Assistant Marion Atyeo explained ACTA is often asked about controlling mice in horticultural crops.

The approach is a little simpler than the high tech immunofertility option that was explored by the former CRC for many years.

“The problems of mice in horticultural crops include direct gnawing, and also faecal contamination of broccoli and cauliflower heads,” she said.

Michelle Smith explained the Immunofertility approach has now been formally abandoned by the IA-CRC, as a replicating transmissible sterility virus could not be found.

“There is currently nothing registered for controlling mice in such crops, so we have studied the problem in the UQ rodent enclosures.”

“Not surprisingly, there were also insurmountable difficulties in achieving approval for the release of a genetically modified mammalian virus, even if a technical success could be achieved,” she said.

“We have shown that MOUSEOFF® Zinc Phosphide in bait stations can achieve excellent control of mice in cauliflower, radish, turnip and broccoli crops.”

“We are taking the simpler path of testing existing or emerging rodenticides and formulations by applying them to intensive crops or industrial situations.”

RATTOFF® in Plantations

In a study near Cooktown last year, several million dollars worth of teak trees were saved from rats that burrowed into the roots to destroy the young plantation trees.

If the data is positive we will seek APVMA approval for these new formulations.

Separate studies supported by the banana and macadamia industries are showing a dramatic reduction of rat numbers after using RATTOFF®.

Michelle explained the team is already getting excellent control of mice in a variety of situations.

MOUSEOFF ZP in Industrial Situations

“In one industrial food-processing situation, mice were invading from surrounding pasture areas,” she said.

“This new control option may assist in reducing the rodent role in the transmission of leptospirosis, which is a common disease in banana industry workers,” Michelle said.

Foxes pelted in the USA



This image was sent through to us from the US, and shows what can be achieved with traps. Phil Brown of South-eastern Pennsylvania USA trapped 1,202 foxes in 90 days. There are 1,185 fox pelts in this picture, 11 he threw away for mange and 6 because of dog damage to the pelts.

His impressive statistics included:

- 1,202 foxes caught in 90 days
- 1,200 caught in 89 days
- 9,247 traps checked in 90 days
- 13 fox average a day for 90 days
- 683 males
- 519 females
- 24 days with 20 or more foxes per day
- Best day 34 fox-135 traps
- maybe best day 30 fox-90 traps
- worst day 0 fox 48 traps
- only 0 day this year
- skinned 964 foxes
- stretched, and dried 888 pelts
- best 8 strait day catch 210 fox
- 1178 traps checked
- Best 7 strait day fox catch 187 fox
- 1043 traps checked.



Photo: Marion Atyeo

Rats caught eating the prototype ACTA blocks inside a MOUSEOFF® Industrial Bait station during trials in Queensland. This demonstrates the capacity of these bait stations for use in rat control programs.