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8L012

Feral Pigs - Draft of the Declared Animal Policy – Livestock SA submission

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In general terms, Livestock SA supports the draft policy and its objectives **on the management of feral pigs in South Australia.**

However, Livestock SA is disappointed that the draft policy gives scant attention to the disease risk posed by feral pigs. Livestock SA, while not directly involved with the pork industry has noted the real concerns of that industry. As Livestock SA represents sheep, beef cattle and goat producers, we are also worried at the risks of spreading diseases to these animals.

We are also concerned that the draft policy does not go far enough. There needs to be a well-funded coordinated program if the State is to ensure that there is not an increase in numbers of feral pigs in this State that threatens both our agriculture and the environment.

As Livestock SA Board member Gillian Fennell commented, “We cannot afford to underestimate the capacity of feral pigs to destroy the environment, spread disease and ruin infrastructure. Having had first-hand experience of this foul creature in North West and Far North Queensland, they are very aggressive and will take lambs, ruin crops and water points and pose a genuine threat to pets and human safety. They will aid in the spread of parasites, weeds and disease and cannot be allowed to expand their range in South Australia. Any and all methods must be employed in their control and it must be a priority of any NRM group, government, landholders, farmers and environmental agencies to assist wherever possible.”

It is concerning that there have been no prosecutions for releases of pigs in South Australia since 1986. There are anecdotal comments about the release of pigs in some parts of the State such as near the quarantine station on the Barrier Highway at Oodla Wirra. Although the sighting and destroying of these pigs is sporadic in this region (another feral pig was recently shot between Wilmington and Quorn) this shows that there is an emerging problem.

Although it is accepted that landholders are responsible for destroying feral pigs on their land, this is not always possible when these pigs move on and off the property. For this reason, it is necessary to work closely with NRM Boards, and it is appreciated that in the draft policy that NRM Boards will try and source funding to assist in coordinating culling programs, and to target feral pigs in the areas of greatest impact.

While Livestock SA and its members are very willing to work closely with NRM Boards on this issue, there needs to be a coordinated, State-wide approach. It should not be left to NRM Boards that have limited funds and competing priorities. The State level risk assessment is for the 'destruction of all populations,' and yet only two NRM Boards in the listed actions support this.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A Curtis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "A" being particularly large and prominent.

Andrew Curtis
CEO