



Your strong and independent
voice for livestock producers

LIVESTOCK SA...

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20L175

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Dr Kerry Degaris,
Limestone Coast Landscape Board
By Email: LandscapeSA.LCLandscapeBoard@sa.gov.au

Dear Dr Degaris,

Limestone Coast Landscape Board - Pest Management Strategy Review

Those involved in the development of the Limestone Coast biosecurity plan for the management of invasive species in the region are to be congratulated on the thoroughness of the pest management plan prepared for consultation. It appears to be a good, detailed assessment of the current situation. In fact, at times there is so much detail in the 115 pages that it is difficult to read some pages and tables, and with the faint type not assisting.

It is to be hoped that the plan will be able to give a good basis for some effective pest polices for the effective management and control of pest plants and animals. This is where the real work will be required.

Livestock SA represents sheep, beef cattle and goat producers across South Australia, including within the Limestone Coast region. Based on responses from members, pest animals and over-abundant native animals are of much greater concern than pest plants. In the main, the comments in this submission deal with animals. This is not to say that the management of weeds in pastures is not important as part of the farming practices for , sustainable, profitable livestock production in the region.

It is noted that dryland grazing is the dominant land use in the Limestone Coast region, comprising approximately 53% of the land area or 1.5 million hectares of generally improved pastures with sheep and cattle being the main livestock.

Table 4.4 in the plan (on page 33) gives both an appraisal of the current situation and risk assessment for vertebrate pests going forward. Risk assessments nearly always contain elements of a subjective nature. Consideration should be given to supplementing pest risk assessments with benefit cost analyses, so that an economic assessment can also be made of the management and control programs for pest animals and plants.

Management action

Table 1.1 lists the priority pest animal species identified by the assessment and gives various management actions. The following comments are made on these from the perspective of livestock producers and in relation to those pest animals of most concern to members.



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Eradication from region *Aims to remove the pest species from the management area*

- Dingos/wild dogs – agree. This is why Livestock SA has put considerable emphasis on rebuilding South Australia’s dog fence. If this barrier is not effective, wild dogs could soon spread across all of mainland South Australia and this is why sheep producers across the whole State are now paying a levy towards the rebuild (a dog fence rebuild contribution of \$0.12 a head when 5 or more sheep are sold for \$5 per head or more).
- Goats – agree, though can this be clarified as ‘feral goats’?
- Feral pigs – agree.

Destroy Infestations *Aims to significantly reduce the extent of the pest species in the management area*

- Various species of deer – agree.

Contain spread *Aims to prevent the ongoing spread of the pest species in the management area*

- Fallow deer – ideally it would be better if these could also be included with the other species of deer as part of the aim of destroying infestations.
- Rabbits – while this is probably realistic in terms of the feasibility of containment, as it is estimated that rabbits cause losses of over \$200 million a year to Australian agriculture, there is a need to reassess whether to just contain the spread of rabbits is enough. Control of rabbits should be moved to the “Destroy infestations” management category.

Manage pest *Aims to reduce the overall economic, environmental and/or social impacts of the pest species through targeted management*

- Feral cats – it is noted that feral cats are not even mentioned in Table 4.4, and yet can threaten lamb production. Feral cats can carry infectious diseases which can be transmitted to native animals, domestic livestock and humans. The transmission of toxoplasmosis in feral cat faeces to sheep when pregnant can cause abortions. Toxoplasmosis is particularly prevalent in higher rainfall regions and close to scrub areas where they can breed. .
- Foxes – it is noted that there are often proposals for a fox bounty, showing that foxes are an issue and there is a continual need to reduce numbers.

What is missing from this review, is any mention of the management of over-abundant native animals, though dingos are included.

Of particular concern in the Limestone Coast region are the relatively high numbers of kangaroos and the ease with which kangaroo numbers can quickly increase and the effect this can have on total grazing pressure. This has been recognised by the State Government which now allows the commercial harvesting of kangaroos in the Upper and Lower South East. Based on surveys used to determine population estimates, it appears that there are almost 200,000 kangaroos in the region. The quota of Western Grey and Eastern Grey kangaroos that can be harvested in 2020 has been set by the Department for Environment and Water at just over 27,000 or less than 15% of the population. It is obvious that other options also need to be considered for effective control of kangaroos in this region.