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APVMA recommends 75% reduction in wild dog control

The NSW Farmers' Association says it seriously objects to the decision by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) to restrict the use of the aerial application of 1080 for wild dog control to 10 baits per kilometre, a 75% reduction.

1080 is a substance used for the control of vertebrate pests such as wild dogs.

Conservation and Resource Management Committee member Rod Young says an aerial baiting rate of 40 baits per kilometre has proven to effectively control wild dogs for over 40 years and recent research undertaken by the Department of Environment and Conservation has shown that this application does not have a negative impact on tiger quoll populations.

"A bait rate of 40 per kilometre has proved to be effective in controlling wild dog numbers by ensuring an adequate number of baits are placed in strategic wild dog travel corridors, given the rugged terrain, dense tree canopy, inaccessible nature of wild dog habitat in NSW and the consumption of wild dog baits by foxes and feral pigs," Mr Young said.

"We have serious concerns that reducing the aerial bait rate will reduce the effectiveness of most wild dog control programs in NSW, and we call on the Federal and State Ministers for Agriculture to explain the impacts of the decision to livestock producers," Mr Young said.

"The only scientific research into the efficacy of aerial wild dog baiting in NSW was conducted at 40 baits per kilometre, so the established rate should not be reduced, as there is no science to suggest that effective control can be achieved in NSW at a lower application rate," Mr Young said.

The AVPMA has advised the Association that it will raise the baiting rate if scientific research demonstrates that 10 baits per kilometre is ineffective, but Mr Young said that this is not good enough given the current crisis situation.

"The Association would support such research, but in the meantime, we need to keep the baiting rate at levels that are proven to be effective. We have 40 years of practical experience confirming that 40 baits per kilometre is the minimum effective rate in NSW conditions" he said.

Mr Young says current methods used by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, including mound baiting, trapping and the use of an aerial bait rate of 10 baits/km, are proving to be relatively ineffective, and wild dog numbers are increasing in all areas.

"The predation by wild dogs on sheep and cattle is having a major financial and social impact on many farmers. Large areas of the sheep producing areas of eastern NSW have been de-stocked due to the stress and financial losses caused by wild dog attacks. We can't allow this reduction in controls," Mr Young concluded.

The NSW Farmers' Association has successfully lobbied the State Government to ensure aerial baiting was maintained in national parks and other reserves to control wild dogs. The Association is a member of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre's Northern Trial Site project. This project aims to provide a template for the development of wild dog management plans.

An information sheet on this issue can be found at www.nswfarmers.org.au.

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Fast fact: Agriculture employs 122,000 in NSW