

NATIONAL FERAL PIG

ACTION PLAN

Adaptive, collaborative and sustained feral pig
management: is it possible?

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NSW Vertebrate Pest Symposium

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Feral pigs in Australia are not a new problem

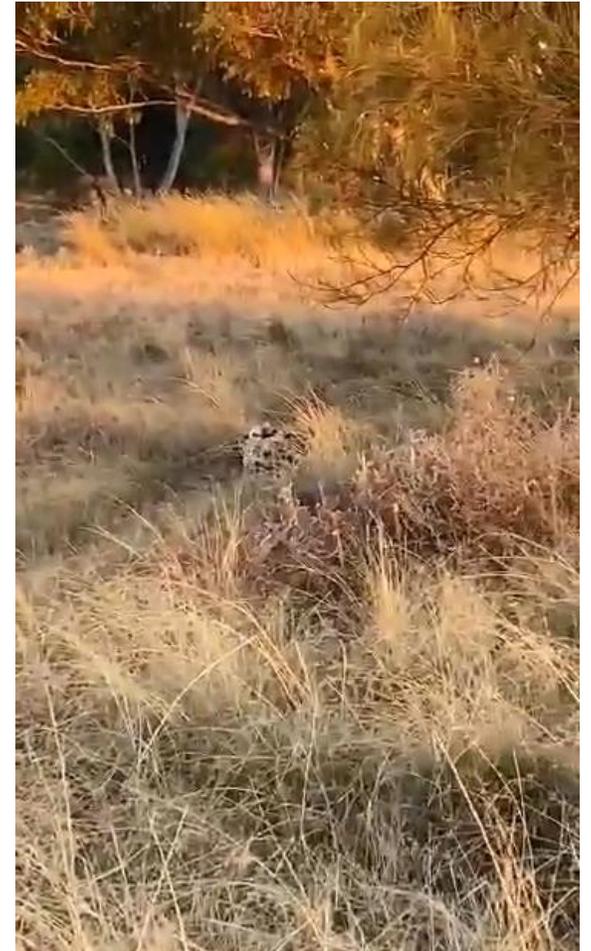
- Been an issue since 1788
- Established pest
- Inhabit ~45% of Australia's land mass
- Exploded in numbers in response to La Nina weather patterns over past 3 years
- Damage caused by feral pigs continues to be experienced to diverse range of assets
- Building coordinated, community-led action on a landscape scale, cross-tenure basis - *National Feral Pig Action Plan 2021-2031*



Photo courtesy of Bec Gray, NSW LLS

Feral pigs – a challenging species to control

- Intelligent, adaptive, resilient and evasive species
- Annual removal rate of at least >70% required due to their high reproductive rate
- Very mobile in their home range
- Without control, potential for population to increase by 86% annually
- Need knowledge of spatial and temporal movement and preferred habitats of feral pigs in different landscapes and regions
- We need to outsmart the pig ... but are we?



Importance of actions to improve local pest and weed management*

	Important / moderately important	Slightly important	Not important
New or improved control tools (e.g. baits, traps, chemicals)	83	11	7
Greater access to information on control options/methods/tools	81	13	7
New or improved control methods	79	13	8
More management activities by other land managers (public and private)	76	15	10
Better access to existing biological control agents	74	14	12
Improved information about requirements for accessing control tools (e.g. licencing, approval)	70	18	12
Better coordination of landholders management activities by using an agency/group	66	20	14
Enforcement by agencies to ensure landholders adhere to pest and weed control	64	18	18
Greater resources to assist with coordination (e.g. a coordinator or facilitator)	64	19	17
More extension/training services	63	21	16

Peers and neighbours – most important sources of information/advice

Coordinated action for feral pigs is at a low base

- Only 9.7% of land managers participated in facilitated vertebrate pest programs
- ~70% of land managers were not aware of these activities in their local area
- In 2022, 16% of land managers spent an average of \$3,758 on feral pig control
- 7% of land managers engaged contractors to control feral pigs, for an average of 19 days

Different land managers take action for different reasons

- How do we influence peers and neighbours?
- What mechanisms are needed to encourage collective, longer term action by land managers?

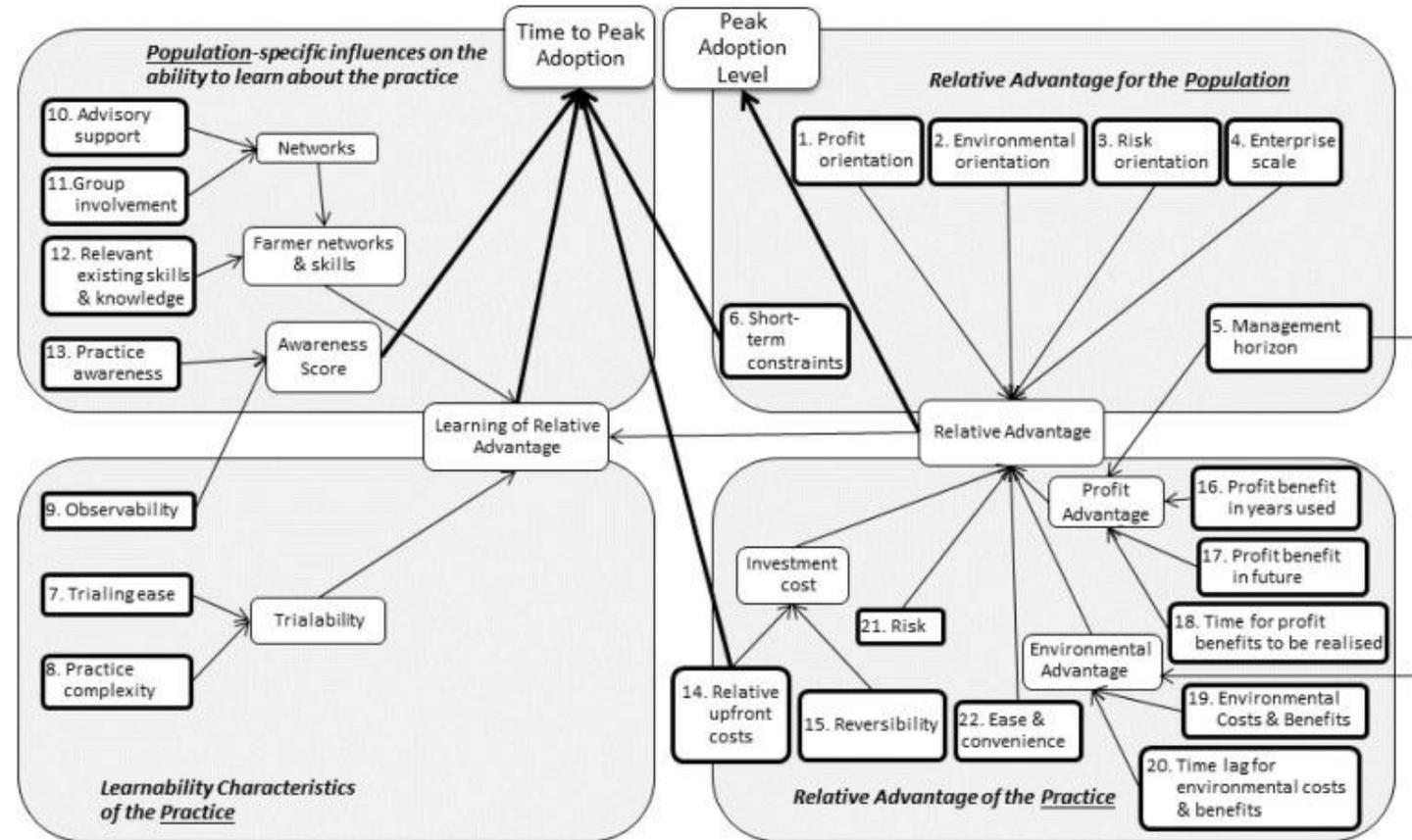
Our actions can impede management outcomes

- Short term vs. long term actions
- Reactive vs. proactive management
- Inconsistent and ineffective management practices
 - Impatience
 - Cutting corners
 - Impacts on feral pig behaviour
 - Removal of individuals not whole sounder groups
- Focus on numbers removed rather than impacts – changes in feral pig impacts from control programs are largely not being measured – it's hard



Feral pig management is all about people

- There is no silver bullet!
- Range of best practice management tools available
- Integrated approach recommended - use a variety of these tools strategically, effectively, efficiently at the most appropriate time for the pig
- Monitoring tools and technology uptake – time/labour savings, evidence
- Adoption rates can differ between best practice management and monitoring tools

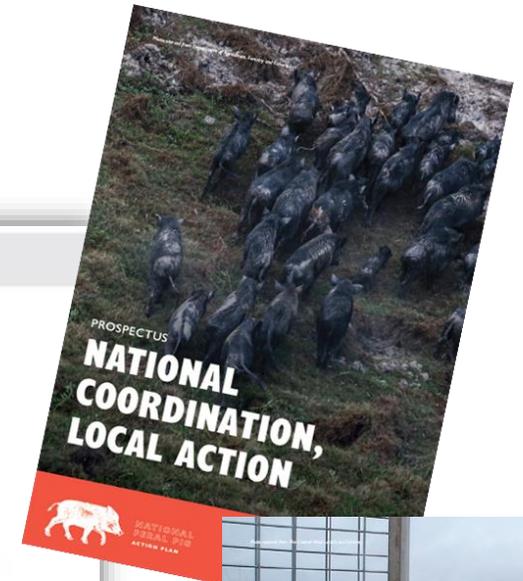
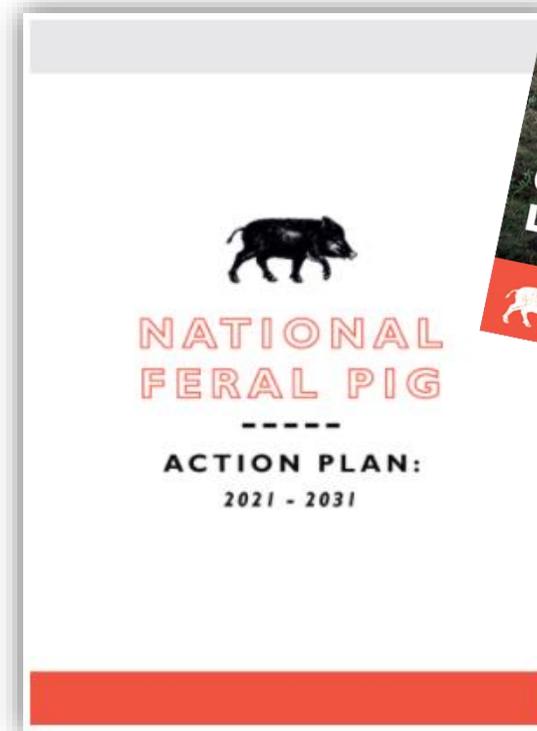


A conceptual framework depicting how land managers are influenced to adopt new technology

Long term problem requiring long term solutions

Priorities

- Promoting coordinated and collaborative action on landscape scale, nil tenure basis
- New opportunities to support longer term resourcing and engagement – co-investment, carbon and biodiversity markets...
- Monitoring metrics
- Planning - working smarter, not harder
- Identifying and filling knowledge gaps - RD&E gap analysis and new RD&E Plan
- Stakeholder engagement and communication activities
- Building land manager networks and knowledge sharing



Demonstration sites – using these as examples

Program	Local	Cross approach	Community	Impact	Population surveillance	Use of technologies	Capacity and building
Carpentaria	✓	✓	✓				✓
Cape York	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Kangaroo	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
MidWest	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Western	✓	✓	✓	Evaluation	✓	✓	✓
Whitsunday	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Notes: Participation rates of land managers varies across some sites
 Programs are not secured across multiple years
 Involvement of demonstration sites (and other programs) into RD&E projects as trial sites

The NFPAP hasn't killed a pig... but it is driving:

- Strategic focus on major challenges
- Coordination and collaboration between stakeholders in management programs and RD&E
- New approaches and initiatives
- Practice and behaviour change of land managers (slowly but surely...)
- Sharing of knowledge
- Strengthening of stakeholder relationships and community networks
- Improved communications between public and private land managers



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