



Livestock producers keep sights set on wild dogs

Cattle and sheep producers across Australia are ramping up the battle against wild dogs, with national industry organisations throwing their weight behind the leadership of AgForce and other state farm groups to address this costly problem.

AgForce pest management spokesperson Rachael Pratt said it was encouraging to see Meat & Livestock Australia make these four-legged predators a priority during their 'Wild dogs – what is all the howling about?' breakfast in Brisbane last week (Friday 3 June).

"For too long, wild dogs have been labelled 'just a sheep problem' when in actual fact they have a significant impact on cattle production as well," Ms Pratt said.

"AgForce's ground-breaking research into the economic impact of wild dogs in Queensland, completed in 2009, identified a \$67 million annual cost which is shared by the entire grazing industry so it is imperative MLA takes up the charge at a national level across all red meat industries."

Ms Pratt said the breakfast was an opportunity for AgForce and other industry groups to hear about national research into wild dog management from NSW Department of Primary Industries senior research scientist, Peter Fleming, who is part of the Invasive Animals Co-operative Research Centre.

"Dr Fleming identified that a community approach is required for the control of wild dogs on a national scale," Ms Pratt said.

"He provided an insight into the advances being made by the Invasive Animal CRC for smarter control methods such as using GPS collars for aerial baiting strategies and research into guardian dogs for livestock.

"Wild dogs are still very much on the agenda in the R&D that is being continued by the Invasive Animal CRC, and AgForce supports this CRC's current rebid process. The huge steps forward in wild dog control which have occurred from the small amount of research undertaken to date highlights the need for more investment in wild dog research to secure even bigger outcomes."

As the voice of Queensland beef cattle and sheep producers, AgForce also supports the moves taken by MLA to expand their Cash Cow project to include neospora and hydatids testing, in recognition of the cost of wild dogs to beef production as well as sheep enterprises.

"AgForce is encouraged to see both the AWI and MLA put emphasis on the wild dog problem by investing funds in research and control projects," Ms Pratt said. "With the support of these national industry bodies, there is potential for an initiative such as AgForce's wild dog report, which exposed the cost that wild dogs impose on both sheep and cattle industries, to be taken up nationally to help shift community perceptions about how this problem is managed."

AgForce continues to lead wild dog control in Queensland through its Wild Dog committee and involvement on the Queensland Dog Offensive Group.

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