

FREE-FEEDING OF FERAL PIGS

Free-feeding is an **essential** part of feral pig poisoning. The aim is to encourage pigs to feed readily on the bait material at selected sites.

To ensure that the maximum number of pigs are attracted to the site, free-feeding should be continued for at least 10 days after pigs begin to take feed. If free-feeding is not carried out properly there is little chance of poisoning all pigs in an area, and survivors may avoid poisoned bait in the future. It is better to free-feed at one site for a long period of time than to free-feed for a short period at many sites.

The way to go about free-feeding is this:-

1: Select free-feed sites

- Sites should be in, or close, to areas of recent pig activity. Such sites include pig pads, areas of thick cover, creeks and swamp edges.

- Choose sites with adequate access, since you may need to carry in large amounts of feed.

2: Free-feeding

- Inform your local APB District Officer that a free-feed programme is starting.

- Suitable feedstuffs include:- clean grain, lupins and pig pellets. The same feed material should be used throughout the programme whether as free feed or poisoned bait.

- Start by placing feed in heaps of about 1 kg. At least 7 kgs should be left at each site. Sheltered areas should be used to minimize the effects of weather, and disturbance by non-target animals.

3: Monitor feeding activity

- Check the free-feed sites every day. Replace any feed eaten. If all has been eaten, put out double the quantity next time. Always try to provide a surplus.

- When feed has been taken for at least 10 days, and the amount eaten daily remains stable for at least 3 days, contact the APB. Now is the time for them to lay poison.

NOTE: During free-feeding, try not to disturb the pigs. Although pigs may become quite tame during feeding, they will easily be dispersed. Dogging and

shooting should be avoided and visits to the free-feeding sites should be as brief as possible.

For further information on free-feeding or the control of feral pigs, contact your local APB district officer or the Agriculture Protection Board, Baron-Hay Court, South Perth (09) 3683333.

