

A photograph of a wild boar in a grassy field. The boar is in the foreground, facing right, with its head slightly lowered. It has dark, coarse fur and a prominent snout. In the background, another boar is visible, partially obscured by the foliage. The background is a dense thicket of green leaves and branches, creating a natural, somewhat blurred setting.

# Douglas Shire Council

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## FERAL PIG TRAPPING PROGRAM

Guidelines to Council-assisted  
pig trapping on private property  
information, responsibilities and  
agreement.



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## **Restricted Invasive Animal**

Legal requirements:

The feral pig is a category 3, 4 and 6 restricted invasive animal under the Biosecurity Act 2014. It must not be moved, fed, given away, sold, or released into the environment. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive animals under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO).

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive animals in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on feral pigs. Some of these actions may be required under local laws.

Contact your local government for more information. An animal ceases being considered an invasive restricted animal (feral) if a person is keeping it and has become a registerable biosecurity entity (RBE) to keep that designated animal. Feral pigs can be considered as designated animals if a person keeps them.



# Background

Pigs are an introduced animal that exist in large numbers throughout Australia including the Douglas Region. Pigs impact on agricultural, residential and natural lands by way of soil disturbance, damage to waterways, destruction of crops and potentially, by spreading disease.

In Queensland, feral pigs are a restricted invasive animal under the Biosecurity Act 2014. This legislation places responsibility for their control onto every landholder. The feral pig a category 3,4 & 6 restricted invasive animal under the Biosecurity Act 2014

Pigs are difficult to control due to their intelligence, their nocturnal feeding habits and cautious behaviour. Further, pigs are adaptive to various food sources, and are known to cover large ranges following seasonal feeding patterns. Landholders commonly report annual re-occurrences of pig activity, particularly along rain-forest fringes and creeks.

There are four basic control options for pigs and all of these carry impracticalities;

- Trapping- Labour intensive. Sometimes limited captures.
- Hunting- Illegal on some land tenures. Can drive pigs into other areas.
- Fencing- Cost can be prohibitive on large acreage. Can drive pigs into other areas.
- Poisoning- Not target specific. Illegal on various land tenures and near populated areas.

There are inefficiencies and impracticalities with all of the above control options, and in many areas the latter three are simply not an option. More information about control options is available at [www.nrm.qld.gov.au](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au) or [www.daff.qld.gov.au](http://www.daff.qld.gov.au).

Although trapping is labour intensive and at times ineffective, it remains Douglas Shire Council's primary control measure for pigs. Success in trapping on private property is heavily reliant on participation from landholders

## **Council can assist landholders by:**

- Supplying and installing traps on a hire basis
- Euthanasing and disposing of trapped animals
- Providing advice and assistance

## **You will be required to:**

- Manage the baiting and opening/closing of traps
- Monitor activity and captures
- Ensure public safety and welfare of the animals





# Trapping tips & tricks

Trapping is the most effective technique for reducing feral pig numbers in the wet tropics.

In the wet tropics region special care must be exercised when trapping due to the presence of non-targets including native species (e.g. wallabies) and rare and endangered species (e.g. cassowaries). Many animals are attracted to commonly used trap baits such as bananas and other fruits and there is a chance of catching non-targets. To minimise this risk pig traps must be made with a trigger mechanism that is selective for feral pigs. The pig specific trigger recommended is a heavy lifting bar activating a side swinging gate (see section on “Trap Design” below). Trapping is flexible and can be incorporated into routine property management activities making use of existing labour and materials.

## **Steps to good trapping:**

The key elements to catching whole groups of pigs in traps at one time while excluding non-target species are appropriate trap design, free feeding, suitable trap locations, maintenance of the door mechanism, and regular inspection once the trap is “set”.

## **Additional recommendations when trapping:**

- Stop all activities that will disturb normal feeding. For example, do not undertake any shooting or dogging.
- The trapping site should be in a shady area with as much natural vegetation cover as possible. It should also be close to pig sign. Vehicle access is recommended as carrying large amounts of bait to a trap on foot will soon become a chore.
- Traps should be located in a circuit to make for easy daily checking. This task could possibly be included in other daily duties.
- Pre-feeding should be carried out at several potential sites prior to trap placement, with the sites showing most pig activity being selected. Once the trap is set up, place fresh bait material both outside and inside to keep the pigs feeding at the site. Once the pigs settle down and are regularly feeding put fresh bait inside the trap only. Undertake feeding within the trap for several nights before it is set. It is important to ensure that all the pigs in a group are going into the trap before it is set.
- The bait used should initially be whatever pigs are naturally eating. Pigs feeding on one crop (e.g. sugar cane) will often not take to an alternative food (e.g. Bananas). However, experimenting with a few different baits (e.g. fermented grains, molasses) can produce good results. Bait should be readily available at low or no cost as large quantities will be required; where bananas or other waste fruit is available these can produce good results.



A photograph of a wire trap set in a field. Several feral pigs are gathered near the trap, some appearing to be entering or exiting. The background shows a fence and some vegetation.

# Trapping tips & tricks

- Set the trap every night and check each day. If the trap cannot be checked daily then shade and water must be provided.
- Trap triggers set too finely often only catch the first pig in. Even small traps with reasonably coarse trigger settings often catch the entire mob. When trapping a group of pigs put more bait at the back of the trap than under the trigger. It only takes one pig to set off the trigger.
- Do not be deterred if pigs are hesitant to enter the trap at first, as a little time should overcome this. Some ideas for enticing shy pigs into the trap include:
  1. Disturbing the ground inside the trap with a hoe
  2. Using aromatic attractants such as vanilla essence, aniseed, or fish oil;
  3. Laying a bait trail from the pad or fresh diggings to the trap.
- While pigs are being caught at one site continue to pre-feed at other sites so that the trap can be moved and immediately continue to catch pigs when the first site is exhausted.
- Always use the lifting bar trigger, which is normally a straight branch about 100 mm in diameter. Ensure the slot on the door end is wide enough and releases freely, and the other end of the bar is tied down to the trap wall. Do not use trip wires as less pigs will be caught and possible non-target species (e.g. cassowary, wallaby) captures can result.
- Use of a door latch will prevent trapped pigs from opening the door once trapped.
- Keep activity in the area of the trap to an absolute minimum ie. don't leave unnecessary human scent near the trap site by urinating or smoking and don't have a dog present.
- Stop hunting and the use of dogs on the entire prop-erty while trapping is in progress. Dogging and hunting make pigs nervous and trap shy.
- Destroy or remove trapped pigs from the trap as quickly and humanely as possible.
- Trapping when agricultural feed is in short supply (e.g. after the cane harvest) often produces good results.
- Maintaining a trapping program in the off season also re-duces the potential for damage to the next seasons crop.

Please visit [DAF's Feral Pig Fact sheet](#) or [Invasive plant and animal publications](#) for more information. You can also contact DAF by phoning their information centre phone on 132523.

# Using Council's traps

Council uses the box trap design, in one-piece or collapsible construction. Limited access may require the collapsible version to be installed in situations when a vehicle cannot drive up to the trap site. Both versions utilise a swinging door and a gate trip mechanism. The gate trip mechanism is designed to be pig-specific, minimising the chance of catching non-target species such as cassowaries and wallabies.



Close up of lifting bar trigger attachment to door

The principle incorporates a horizontal rigid bar 20 to 30 cm above the ground and fixed by one end to the trap wall. The other end holds the side swinging trap gate open by a slot which slides over the mesh in the gate. When the trap is set, the area behind the trigger bar should be no more than 60 cm wide. Non-targets can feed over the bar, but pigs feed under it and end up lifting the bar off the spring loaded side swinging door allowing it to shut. While non-target species can also feed under the bar, they tend to be less vigorous than pigs in their feeding habits and don't lift the bar. An additional safeguard is to make the lifting bar about 100mm in diameter and heavy so that only the vigorous feeding activity of pigs will set it off.

## Some safety considerations



Beware of sharp edges- corners, wire and galvanising may cause injury. Wear gloves when installing, baiting and disarming trap



Beware of moving parts- the trap door is armed under strong tension and there is risk of injury if the gate accidentally slams- wear gloves.



Ensure the trap is anchored with star pickets when in use. Pigs are very powerful and unanchored traps can be damaged, or pigs may escape.



Ensure visitors and children are warned and/or kept clear of the trap. Traps are fitted with signage to warn people of the dangers.



Keep clear of trapped animals. Minimise contact to ensure that the animals are not unnecessarily agitated.



If suckers (juveniles) are trapped be aware that the mother may be near the trap to protect them! In this situation, sows are known to attack people.



Note that pigs are said to carry zoonotic diseases. Avoid contact with fluids and faecal matter by using gloves and good hygiene.



# Legal Obligations

The following legislation applies to Pig trapping and a brief description of the Acts' relevance is included. Copies of the Acts mentioned below are available at [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au)

## **Local Government Act 2009**

This forms the basis of Council's function and powers given to Officers. It also governs the way in which Council operates financially relevant to fees and charges associated with trap hire and cost recovery.

## **Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011**

Outlines that all people have an obligation to ensure workplace health and safety, binding people to follow instructions and policies, use personal protective equipment and to not put themselves or others at risk.

## **Weapons Act 1990**

Binds firearms users to licensing and safe storage and handling requirements. Douglas Shire Council holds a group firearms licence with trained Officers who can humanely destroy pigs by way of rifle shot. Shooters should observe the "Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, Land Transport of Pigs".

## **Biosecurity Act 2014**

This legislation prohibits the feeding of animal matter to stock and this includes using meat in pig taps. Relating to pig trapping, the Biosecurity Act 2014 binds people to report any suspected disease so as to prevent any possible spread.

## **Animal Care and Protection Act 2001**

Sets out the practice of ensuring animals that are trapped are done so in a humane manner to minimise pain and suffering.

## Avoid animal suffering



Ensure traps are armed between Sunday evening and Friday morning- weekend attendance only by prior arrangement with attending Officer.



Ensure traps are disarmed Friday morning until Sunday evening by wiring the door shut weekend attendance only by prior arrangement with attending Officer



Ensure traps are checked before 7am each day. Contacting Council early will minimise disruption to other duties and minimise stress on the trapped animal.



Failing to follow these steps may result Council being unable to attend to destroy the trapped animal/s:

- The landholder may be required to feed and water the animal/s.
- The landholder may be required to employ a Vet to destroy the animal/s.