



Fox Baiting

By staff of the Vertebrate Pest Research Section, Forrestfield

Baiting with 1080 poison can be very effective in reducing fox numbers. Used with care, it can be safe for humans, non-target animals and the environment.

This farmnote gives instructions for using poison baits and outlines other ways of maximising the number of baits taken by foxes. It should be read in conjunction with farmnote 'Guide to the Safe Use of 1080 Poison' and registered product labels and Directions for Use.

1080 baits

Trained landholders can purchase bait products containing 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) after they have obtained Baiting Approval from an authorised officer of the Department of Agriculture.

Farmnote 'Guide to the Safe use of 1080 Poison' details important precautions when using 1080, including:

- notification of your neighbours;
- erection of warning signs;
- careful use of 1080 in high risk areas;
- responsible security, storage and disposal of baits; and
- effective personal safety.

1080 poison

There is no antidote for 1080 poisoning.

1080 is a naturally occurring compound that is quickly broken down in the environment. Many native animals have developed a high degree of tolerance to 1080 while foxes (and domestic dogs and cats) are very sensitive to the poison.

Effective poisoning periods

The most effective fox control is achieved during late winter and spring. At this time food demands are high as



foxes are rearing young. Foxes are also less mobile and so reinfestation of baited areas can be delayed.

At other times (especially autumn) foxes are more mobile. Baiting will only temporarily reduce numbers, as new animals will move in to replace resident animals that have been killed. Consequently baiting may need to be repeated to achieve maximum control.

Community baiting drives

A district-wide campaign involving community groups can reduce the extent and speed of reinfestation as a large area is baited simultaneously. Such efforts are also more cost-effective. These baiting drives rely on co-operation amongst all landholders to achieve effective fox control.

How many baits?

The recommended bait density for Western Australia is five per km² (that is, 5 per 100 hectares). Research, in this State, has shown that at this rate at least 80 per cent of foxes should be killed but an increased bait density does not appear to increase the overall number of foxes killed. When areas of fox activity can be specifically targeted, fewer baits will be required.

Where to lay baits

Individual baits should be placed at least 200 m apart; otherwise one fox may find and eat more than one bait. Baits should be laid at strategic points (see map) including:

- where fox tracks are regularly seen;
- along water courses, tracks and at fencelines where foxes regularly travel;
- at prominent points within paddocks (jutting corners, rock piles, posts);
- under or near carcasses visited by foxes.

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Agriculture and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

Refer to Directions for Use to ensure that requirements such as distances from boundaries are met.

How to lay baits

The position of all baits should be marked with marker tape, pegs or something similar so they are easy to recover as required, at the end of the control campaign.

In areas where there are farms and reserves near closely settled areas, meat baits should be:

- buried about 10 to 20 mm below the soil surface to reduce the risk of poisoning non-target animals that seldom dig for baits, or
- tethered by a length of light wire or similar to prevent them being moved (for example, by birds).

In areas where there are typical rural properties with low numbers of people, meat baits can be buried, tethered or hidden under vegetation, rocks or fallen timber so that birds cannot see them.

In all areas, eggs baits should always be buried 20 to 100 mm below the soil surface to decrease hazards to non-target animals.

Improving the percentage of baits taken

- Individual baits should be available to foxes for about 10 days.
- Check baits at least every two days to assess 'take'.
- If a fox takes a bait, keep replacing it until no more are removed.
- Move uneaten baits to areas where others have been taken.

- Foxes more quickly locate baits laid on a scent trail that is broken between baits. Do not use a continuous scent trail as an individual fox can take many baits.

Baiting evaluation

Foxes poisoned with 1080 are seldom located. This can give the false impression that baiting is not effective. If baits are laid correctly, a count of the baits taken will give an indication of the number of foxes killed.

Further information

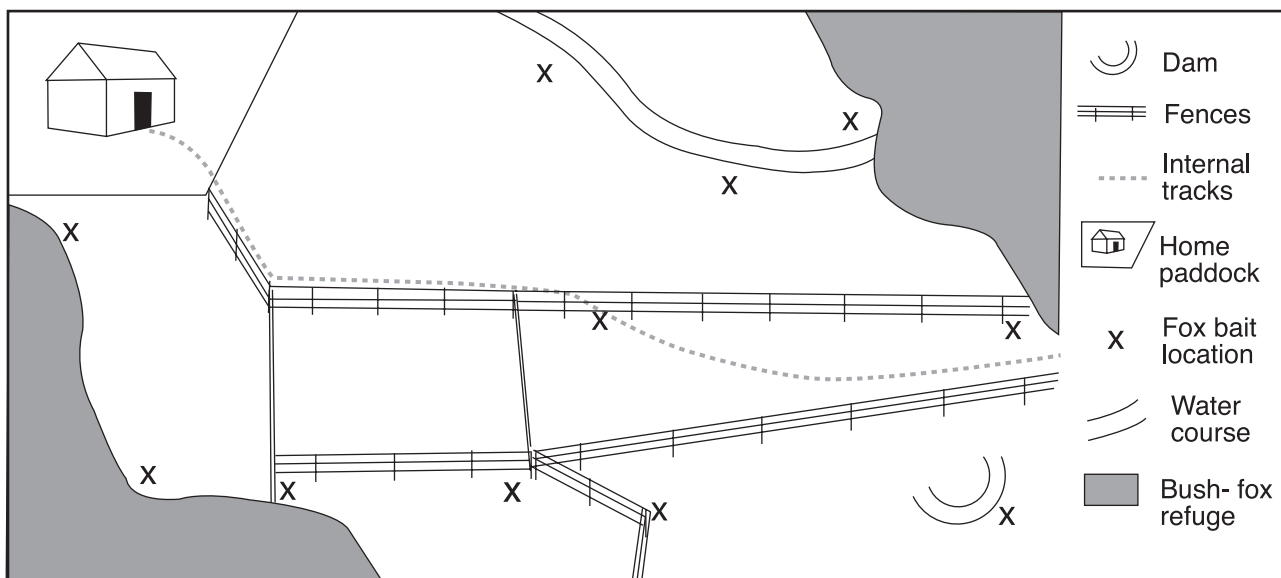
For further advice and assistance in controlling foxes, contact your local Department of Agriculture office, or the South Perth office on tel. 9368 3333.

There are a number of publications on fox control available from departmental offices or on the website.

Remember foxes and other animals, especially birds, can move baits, so follow the recommended procedures to minimise this risk.

Final checklist

- Warn your neighbours before baiting and put up warning signs.
- Keep dogs and cats restrained while baits are out.
- Retrieve all uneaten fox baits at the end of the control campaign.
- Dispose of leftover baits and containers appropriately.
- Wash your clothes and hands after handling baits.



Examples of appropriate locations for fox baits on a farming property.

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