



TRAPPING OF FERAL PIGS



This practical guide provides advice that will help you manage feral pig problems in the Dry Tropics region.

Several techniques are available to control feral pigs. Generally no stand alone technique is sufficient for each situation so a suite of integrated techniques or combination of methods is necessary. When developing a pig control strategy, managers need to consider what problems pigs are causing and which control option or combination of options is most suitable to **reduce the problem**. Trapping can be an effective technique when integrated with other control techniques or for reducing pig populations where other control techniques are not possible or when food or water resources are limited.

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INTRODUCTION

Trapping, in some form or another, is one of the most commonly used control measures for many invasive animal species, including feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*). Trapping of feral pigs has gained increasing acceptance as trap designs improve, feeding behaviour is better understood and the restrictions on the use of poisoned baits increases. The increasing popularity of trapping is also due to landholders being able to see the dead pigs and know exactly how many have been controlled, unlike poisoning programs where the results are hard to assess. Traps have been designed to be species selective and effective traps pose minimal danger to non-target species. Trapping also allows the pigs to be used as an economic return to the landholder if the trapped pigs can be utilised in the “chiller box” industry.

While trapping is not the best choice to remove large numbers of animals at a time, traps are useful as a pinpoint control effort – a tool to remove a small number of pigs or to focus on a relatively small, defined area – and can be a first strike in combination with other techniques. Trapping is best in areas where natural food for pigs is limited or where water and cover is also limited. Trapping also requires some labour and adequate vehicle access to carry the large amount of bait material required.

The main thing to remember is that trapping is a process not an event – it takes time and effort to successfully trap pigs.

ADVANTAGES of trapping over other control methods are:

- Trapping is environmentally friendly and humane.
- Trapping is particularly suited to small areas of high value agricultural crops, closely settled urban areas or in high tourist visitation sites.
- Trapping does not interfere with normal pig behaviour (unlike shooting or dogging) making it less likely that pigs will disperse from the control area.
- The number of pigs controlled is known exactly, and carcasses can be removed.
- Trapping is a flexible technique that can be fitted into routine property activities.
- Properly designed traps can be moved or re-used as necessary.
- Costs can be defrayed against the sale of pig carcasses.
- Trapping can make use of opportunities as they arise.
- Non-target species that are accidentally captured can be released unharmed.
- Trapping can be used when poisoning is impractical, or as a follow up to other control techniques such as poisoning.
- Trapping of feral pigs has gained increasing acceptance as trap designs improve, pig ecology is better understood and the restrictions on the use of poisons increases.

DISADVANTAGES of trapping are:

- The time required and costs to initially build and maintain traps. A large amount of bait material is required for free feeding purposes. The availability of free bait material such as waste bananas or fruit is usually required for large scale trapping programs.
- Trapping may be labour intensive compared to other techniques and is not a rapid method of population reduction.
- Sustained control of the population in inaccessible areas may be difficult to maintain by trapping alone.
- Natural increases due to immigration and breeding may out-produce an ineffective trapping program.
- Sufficient traps must be distributed in a given area so pigs have a high probability of encountering a trap.
- Not all pigs in the area will be trappable. Some pigs may not encounter traps, some pigs may not like the bait and some pigs will refuse to enter the trap.

The major limitation of trapping is that not all pigs can be trapped. Overseas studies have shown that the inherent behaviour of pigs affects the “trappability” of pigs; and the age and gender of pigs can also influence their acceptance or rejection of the trap mechanism. Small inexperienced pigs readily accept the new smell and sight of traps while older boars are much more suspicious and are hence harder to trap. Individuality also should be considered, pigs are intelligent – some more than others – so some pigs are trap smart and difficult to capture. Previous exposure to traps will also influence the trappability of pigs. Escapees from poorly designed traps are difficult to recapture as they learn from the stress of being trapped. In some cases pigs outside the trap can learn of the consequences of traps by observing the distress of trapped pigs.

The main factor influencing trapping success is the trapping opportunity; the encounter rate of pigs with traps. The geography and density of trap locations and the home range of pigs can determine the relative opportunity of pigs to encounter a trap. Some research in southern Australia suggest that a trap has a “drawing” radius of only 800 meters so traps more than 1 km apart may miss some pigs as they may not encounter a trap at all. Once the trap is encountered then other factors such as the palatability of the bait material, the hunger of pigs (determined by the availability of natural food), the behaviour of individual pigs, the effectiveness of the trap design and trap door mechanism all combine to influence trapping success.

Although pig traps are designed for the capture of feral pigs, there is still a risk of capturing other species. Non-target animals that are caught but not injured should be released at the trap site. A rope attached to the gate and then opened from a distance can help. If they are injured, veterinary treatment should be sought. Severely injured non-target animals should be destroyed quickly and humanely. Non-target captures can easily be minimised by using pig-specific gate trip mechanisms and placing barriers across the trap entrance. For example a simple log, rope or wire at a height of 1 metre above the ground at the gate will prevent most cattle from entering.

Trapping can be relatively expensive initially compared to other techniques and therefore generally not practical for large scale control areas. However trap materials can last many years so the initial cost of purchase can be deferred over a long time. Trapping is also labour intensive but labour cost can be reduced if the trapping program is able to be incorporated into routine farm activities.

Pigs that are “missed” by badly designed traps, inexperience or impatient trappers pose three significant problems:

1. They’ve been educated about the trap and will be difficult to catch later.
2. They are still causing damage.
3. And most importantly, they’re still reproducing.

Some common reasons for poor trapping success include:

- Unsuitable trap placement.
- Not enough traps used or set too far apart.
- Lack of ample pre-baiting to condition all pigs to enter the trap.
- Insufficient time given to free feeding.
- Insufficient trap operator’s experience.
- Setting the door before the entire group has entered the trap to pre-feed.
- Setting trap door triggering mechanism incorrectly.
- Using a trap too small to accommodate the pig group.
- Too much natural food available.
- Large pig population size and distribution over vast areas.

TRAPPING STRATEGY

The **key elements** of an effective trapping program are appropriate trap design, suitable placement, adequate number of traps available, availability of palatable bait material, maintenance of the door mechanism and regular inspection to maintain traps and ensure adequate bait material is available.

Before trapping can commence, the first step is to look for areas to place the traps. Selecting a suitable trapping site is one of the most important factors in successful trapping and should be given careful consideration. Areas of **recent pig activity** such as where fresh wallows, pig pads or fresh diggings are seen, especially in likely pig habitats such as swamps, creek lines and forest edges are ideal. Free feeding sites should then be established in these **recent pig activity** areas by depositing small amounts of bait material throughout the site or along roads or tracks. Monitor and replenish these sites for several days to accustom pigs to the bait material and to maximise the number of animals attracted to the area. Using game cameras can help determine pig behaviour in the area and identify optimal locations for trap placement. Continuous use of pad lines used by the visiting pigs will encourage other pigs to follow to the food source. The transfer of information on distant food sources has been observed in a number of animal species, the smell of food in other pig faeces or feeding noises can communicate to other pigs that a distant food source has been found.

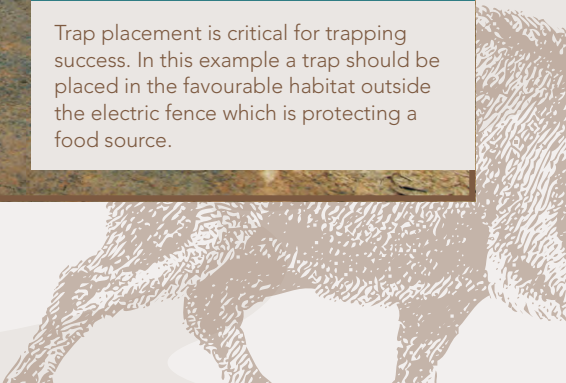


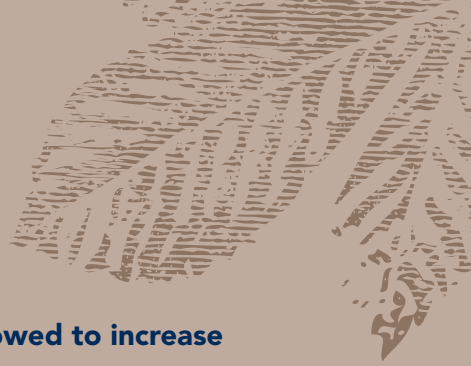
This area is ideal as a trap site as it supplies the food, water and cover requirements that pigs prefer. Any pigs in the vicinity will tend to either live or visit this site.

Pre-feeding should be carried out at several potential sites prior to trap placement. When bait is continually taken from a site then place the trap there and discontinue feeding in the other sites. Once sufficient activity is observed at some of the free feeding sites, trap materials can be deposited at the site to accustom the animals to the smell of the steel mesh. If feeding at the site continues, the trap may be partially erected (leaving a wide entrance way) and the feed material placed inside the trap. When pigs appear to be confident of entering and exiting the trap and taking bait placed at the rear of the trap, finish constructing the trap but leave the gate wired open. Following a few days of further feeding within the trap, the door can then be "set". Pigs must be free feeding inside the trap for at least 3 nights to ensure the whole group is captured.



Trap placement is critical for trapping success. In this example a trap should be placed in the favourable habitat outside the electric fence which is protecting a food source.





Several basic guidelines need to be followed to increase trapping effectiveness:

- Vehicle access is essential, as carrying large amounts of bait to a trap on foot will soon become tiresome. Traps should also be located in a circuit to make for easy daily checking. This task could possibly be included in other farm duties or undertaken as a recreational pursuit.
- Set traps must be inspected each morning as it is inhumane to leave pigs (or other species) in traps for extended periods.
- Non-target captures must be released as quickly as possible. Opening the door with a rope from a distance is ideal to avoid stress to the animals.
- Destroy or remove trapped pigs from the trap as quickly and humanely as possible. Cover up all blood in the trap with dirt or bait material as the smell will sometimes repel other pigs.
- Pigs need time to become accustomed to the strange odour of the trap material and humans. Bright colours or shiny materials should be avoided as pigs have excellent colour vision.
- Bait material should be readily available at low or no cost as large quantities will be required, however experimenting with a few different baits can produce good results. Where pigs are eating carrion, fermented meat meal can be used. Fresh meat, meat products or carcasses can only be used as bait in a trap if pigs are unable to feed from the meat. Enclosing the carcass in a mesh container or meshed off in the corner of the trap is acceptable as long as the pigs cannot access the carcass and then leave the trap. **The direct feeding of meat or meat products to feral pigs in traps is illegal.** In areas where waste fruit is available these can produce good results. Fermented grain and molasses is also good trap bait. Pouring a small amount of creosote or waste engine oil over the trap posts will sometimes attract pigs to the site.

If pigs are hesitant to enter the trap at first, try:

- Placing bait material outside the door or laying a bait trail to the trap.
- Digging up the ground inside the trap.
- Using food attractants such as vanilla essence, aniseed, and creosote or fish oil.





- While pigs are being caught in 1 trap, 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.
- Keep human activity at the trap site to a minimum. **Do not use dogs** around trapping sites, pigs have an acute sense of smell and the odour of a dog, which they regard as a predator, will repel pigs from the site.
- Do not use trip wires as non-target captures will result.
- The Judus pig method may be used in some situations. Older sows are sometimes continually released and learn to keep returning to the trap for food. They invariably keep bringing other group members with them into the trap.
- Brewing a drum of fermenting grain or other bait material inside the pig trap will reduce the daily chore of carrying bait material. The bait can then be simply bucketed out into the trap as required. The additional smell of the bait brewing will help to attract pigs to the trap and help keep pigs at the trap site if the bait material runs out.
- The smell of rotting meat placed in mesh containers and hung on the trap walls will also attract pigs to the trap site. Pouring a small amount of creosote or sump oil over the trap posts or over an old piece of carpet or absorbent material will also attract pigs to the site.
- A major factor affecting trap success is the number of traps available and their distribution in relation to the home range or movements of pigs. A study in NSW indicated that a trap may only draw pigs from an 800 m radius. So if there is insufficient numbers of traps, or areas where traps cannot be placed, this will mean a proportion of the pig population may not even encounter a trap.



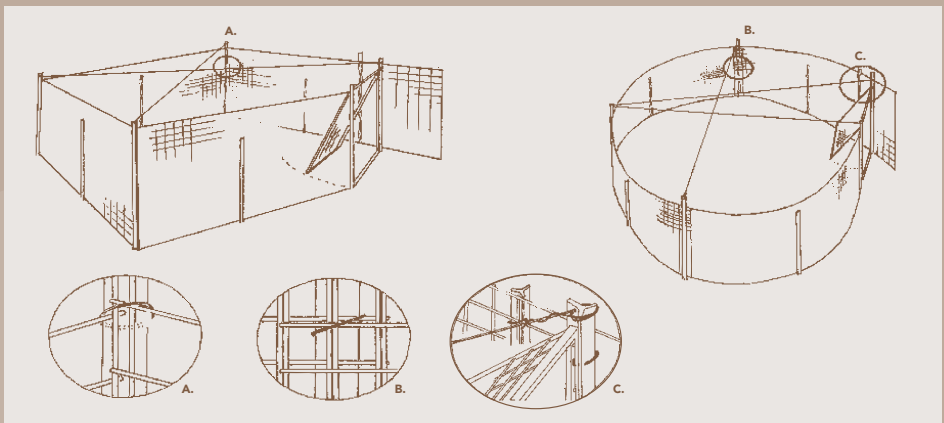
TRAP DESIGNS

All trap designs are principally a steel mesh live trap with a one-way gate. A basic design consists of steel mesh of at least 5mm diameter and a mesh size of no more than 100 mm x 100 mm. The Code of Conduct enforces this mesh size as larger mesh will cause serious injury to charging pigs. Traps should be at least 1.5 m in height or if lower, incorporate a roof or roof bars to prevent pigs climbing or jumping out. Mesh should be black or un-galvanised as shiny mesh can reflect moonlight and may deter pigs. Mesh panels of 2 to 3 metres in length by 1.5 metres in height and 75mm x 75mm x 5mm mesh are generally available from most steel merchants.

Basic principles of trap construction:

- The steel posts should be placed on the outside of the mesh at the corners and weak spots. In soft soil, steel posts can be driven in at a 45 degree angle to help stop lifting.
- The mesh should be wired securely to the steel posts to prevent the mesh being lifted. The bottom of the mesh should be wired to the posts at ground level and at 20cm as this is the point of most impact from charging pigs.
- After wiring, the steel pickets can be tapped down with a sledge hammer to tighten the wire ties.
- Operation of the gate mechanism (tripping the trap) should be quiet, and allow easy passage of pigs of all age groups.
- Trip mechanisms specific to pigs are recommended.
- Place branches or vegetation over the trap to aid in camouflage and to provide shade for captured pigs. Placing branches/sticks across the top of the door will also deter cattle. Rope hung in a loop across the top third of the door will deter cassowaries and emus from entering the trap.

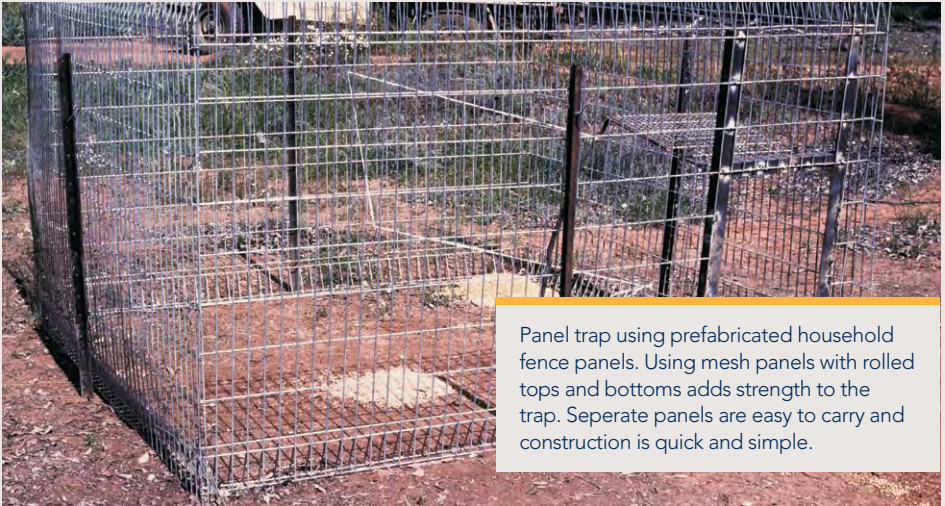
Traps can be of any shape to incorporate trees for extra strength or to avoid rocks, stumps, or holes in the ground etc. The basic shapes are usually rectangular when using mesh panels (usually 2.4 m x 1.5 m) or circular when continuous mesh rolls are available. Steel posts should be placed in the corners of panels and on the outside of the trap (**A**). Extra strength can be obtained by overlapping the mesh panels (**B**). For traps incorporating detachable gates, these should be supported by securely wiring to steel posts that are attached to the mesh (**C**).



There are several basic designs with a multitude of possible variations to suit individual requirements or materials on hand.

The Panel Trap

Is constructed by a series of weldmesh panels wired together and supported at the corners and panel centres by steel posts. Panels may be further strengthened by cross-wires from the tops of the posts. The lifting bar gate design described below can also be used. Panel traps have the advantage of being relatively easy for one man to construct and dismantle and can be transported easily. Adding or removing panels can change the size and shape of the trap, to incorporate trees for additional strength or to avoid rocks, stumps etc. Panels can also have sections of pipe welded to the end of the panels so pins can be used to secure the panels together – similar in design to portable cattle yards.



There are several basic designs with a multitude of possible variations to suit individual requirements or materials on hand.

The Silo Trap

Is superior in strength and capacity to the panel trap. This trap design is constructed from a continuous mesh panel, 10 to 20 metres by 1.5m high and may incorporate a funnel type gate (shown below) or the lifting bar gate described below.

The silo trap is more difficult for one man to construct, dismantle and transport than the other designs and is more suited to semi-permanent trap sites. Post should be at 1.5m apart, and can incorporate available trees to further strengthen the trap. The trap's flexibility will prevent pigs from climbing out or breaking the mesh. Wires can be tied across the top to further strengthen the trap.



In soft mud or sand, posts can be driven in at a 45° angle to prevent pigs lifting the mesh.

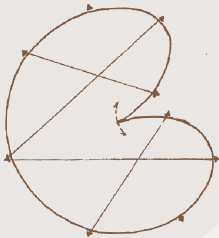


Silo traps were used in the Community Based Feral Pig Trapping Program in the wet tropics (1999 to 2006). Almost 1000 traps were available and 14000 pigs were captured. This trap (pictured) displays some of features of successful trapping – shade incorporated into the trap, door wired back when free feeding and bait material outside the trap so pigs will follow the bait trail into the trap.

Silo traps are flexible in design and can incorporate a number of trap door designs.

There are several different silo trap shapes. The **heart-shaped design** is very popular and effective. This trap is shaped as a heart with the two lobes forming the funnel of the trap. Funnel door design traps may not be as effective with trap-shy pigs, as they must push their way into the trap. Also, loading live pigs (if required) into a trailer from a funnel trap can be difficult. However, this design can cut material costs and can prove to be very effective. Another silo trap shape is the **Figure 6** type in which the trap is shaped into the shape of the number 6. This design has the inside panel of the loop flexible to form a funnel door design to allow pigs to push their way in but not out. Another silo design is the **C type** which consists of two mesh panels; one panel forms the shape of a stretched “C” for the outer portion of the trap. The ends of this C panel touch the other straight line panel. This effectively forms two funnel doors for the one trap.

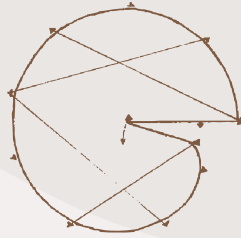
A. Funnel Gate



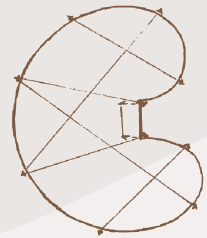
B. Side Swinging Gate



C. Self Sprung Panel Gate



D. Vertical Gate

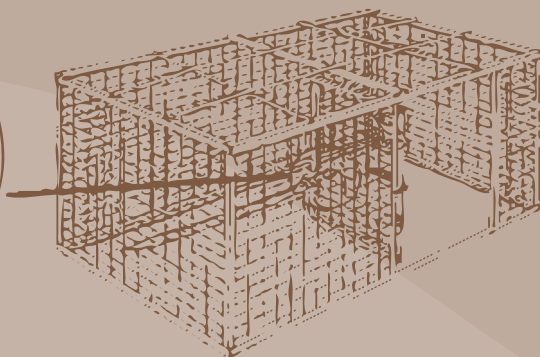
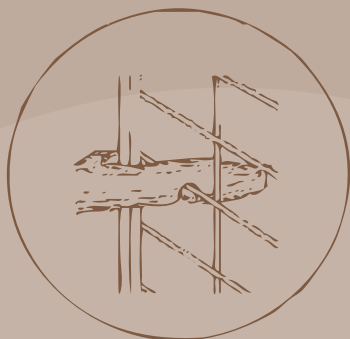




The Portable Box Trap

Has been designed as an efficient and environmentally acceptable method for the control of feral pigs, particularly on smaller properties. The box trap has the advantage of being readily transportable, being designed to fit onto the back of a 4WD and can be set up quickly by one person. The traps are easily relocated so that seasonal movement and availability of food can be fully exploited, with a minimal outlay for materials. If used correctly, this trap is both humane to captured pigs and unlikely to capture non-target species. The box trap is more suitable for individual problem pigs or small groups of pigs. Placing steel posts at the corners will prevent pigs lifting the trap. If the trap is less than 1.5 m high a mesh roof or bars placed on top will prevent pigs from jumping out.

The target specific gate design (below) allows only pigs to “trip” the door thus reducing unnecessary captures of non-target species. The trip bar is designed to release only when lifted. Non- target species will generally stand on or jump over the trip bar which will not release the gate, while pigs will push under the bar lifting it, releasing the spring loaded gate. The trip bar should be made of wood at least 10 cm in diameter or equivalent, the weight will enable only pigs to lift the bar.



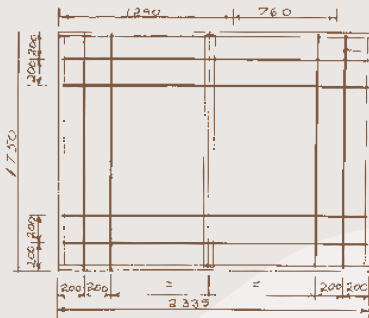


Bait material should be placed throughout the trap to encourage the entire group to enter the trap to feed. This allows time for the group to enter the trap before a pig will attempt to eat the bait under the bar, thus lifting the bar with its back which will release the spring-loaded gate; catching the entire group. The lifting bar should be set approximately 30 to 40cm off the ground.

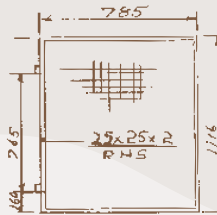
Free feeding is essential to entice the entire group into the trap and should be continued for at least three days after the pigs first enter the trap. Box traps with spring-loaded swing gate entries will allow additional captures as pigs outside can still push their way into the trap.

The materials needed to construct a portable box trap are:

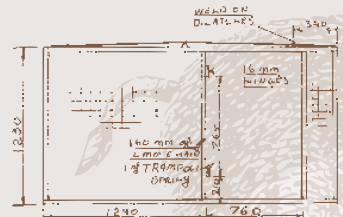
- 5 of 7.5m lengths 40 x 40 x 3 mm angle iron
- 1 of 6m length 25 x 25 x 2 mm RHS (box section)
- 3 of 6m length DB 12 bar (reo bar)
- 1.5 sheets 3m x 2.4m WH423 mesh (75 x 50 x 4 mm preferred)
- 2 of 6 mm cattle gate hinges
- 1 of gate spring (trampoline spring)



Top View



Side View



Front View

- Dimensions have been calculated to fit a standard 4WD tray and to minimise off-cuts. Any available materials may be substituted; however consideration should be given to weight and strength. Mesh size should not exceed 100 x 100mm.
- Roof bars are designed to prevent pigs climbing out and could be changed to 200 mm reo mesh sheet. No roof is required if trap is higher than 1.5 m.
- A short piece of chain should be used between the spring and door frame, to allow tension adjustment and prevent damage to the spring.
- The gap below the door is important to prevent fouling on diggings.

An observational study conducted in the USA examined the efficiency of different trap designs; silo traps compared to box traps. Adult female and juvenile wild pigs entered both styles of trap more readily than did adult males, and adult males seemed particularly averse to entering box traps. Less than 10% of adult male visits to box traps resulted in entries, easily the least percentage of any class at any style of trap. Adult females entered silo traps approximately 2.2 times more often per visit than box traps and re-entered silo traps >2 times more frequently. Juveniles entered and re-entered both box and silo traps at similar rates. Overall (all-class) entry-per-visit rates at silo traps (0.71) were nearly double that of box traps (0.37). Subsequent trapping data supported that the capture rate for silo traps was >4 times that of box traps.

The Gate

The importance of the design and action of the gate is often overlooked. Trapping effectiveness is primarily a function of the gate effectiveness combined with site selection, acceptability of bait and length of pre-feeding. A study in southern Queensland found a strong link between the entrance design and the number of pigs trapped for both sexes and size categories.



- The Self Sprung **Funnel Gate** and **Panel gates** are ends of mesh constructed in a funnel shape and tied together at the top which requires the pigs to push and squeeze their way between the mesh ends into the trap. The steel mesh should be cut so as to leave tynes (sharp off cuts) at

the end of the gate. These tynes should be pointed and turned slightly inwards to prevent pigs from “backing-out” when they are part way through. One common mistake is having too much tension (spring) in the gate. Many pigs lose interest and confidence when they have to force their way through such gates into the trap. Tension should be adjusted to facilitate easy opening and be just enough to return the mesh together after the pig has passed through. A small stick (15cm long) can be placed between the mesh ends to keep the gate open to look more “friendly” to entering pigs. After the first pig enters, the stick falls trapping the pigs; however a pig feeding inside the trap will encourage others to follow through the gate. This gate is easy to construct, works quietly and is unlikely to foul if the sprung ends are at least 5cm above the ground. Cutting off the bottom rung tynes will also prevent fouling as well as pulling back on the star pickets holding the door mesh to lift the funnel off the ground. However, it is not the best gate to trap timid or small pigs. For best results, gates of these designs need to be removed or wired open during pre-feeding. This gate type is more suitable in extensive grazing areas.

- The **Side Swinging gate** has the advantage (when adjusted correctly), of opening and closing easily and quietly, small pigs can easily push the gate open and multiple captures are possible and is perhaps the best pig gate design for these reasons. The closing mechanism can be by a long spring or bungy cord or by using a pulley and counterweight system. The closing mechanism should be adjusted so the gate opens very easily and closes without slamming shut. This gate can also be incorporated into either a silo or panel trap. The lifting bar device described above is the most suitable tripping mechanism for the side swinging door. The lifting trip bar (see below) is normally a straight branch about 10cm diameter. Ensure the slot on the door end is wide enough and releases freely, and the fixed end is tied down.
- Another mechanism is to prop the gate partially open by a stick or wedge, which will fall away as the first pig enters the trap thus allowing the gate to close. The door should be designed to fit inside the steel “angle iron” door frame to stop pigs opening the gate by getting their noses behind the gate.



- **Vertical Gates** pivot at the top and close by gravity. These gates can be extremely robust and easily modified for use with a trip for wary pigs. The disadvantage with the vertical gate is that it closes relatively noisily and this may frighten the pigs entering the trap and deter those others feeding close by. Small pigs may also have difficulty in pushing the gate open. If insufficient free feeding time is given then the outside pigs will balk at the closed gate and only the pig that sets the trap off will be captured.



The design of this vertical door is to entice pigs to push through the closed gate. The created void in the trap wall entices pigs to put their head in (especially if bait material still remains there) to push through the gate. The mesh sides support the gate and prevent the trapped pigs from escaping.



The door should be wired up for free-feeding. Once pigs commence feeding, a prop can be used to hold the door half open; as the back of the entering pig forces the gate up, the prop will fall away and the gate will close after the pig enters.

A version of this vertical gate design uses a number of individually hinged vertical reinforcing bars or pipes, 50mm apart, which hinge from the top of the door. The hinging mechanism should be robust enough to stop each bar being pushed aside. Pigs can push their way in while the bottom bar prevents the bars being pushed backwards so preventing the pigs from escaping. Pigs find this door mechanism easy to push through as they do not have to lift the entire door. Small pigs may only need to push up one or two bars thus making entry easy. Grooves in the bottom bar that allow the vertical bars to fit into will further strengthen the door when pigs are trying to escape.



SUITABLE FREE FEEDING BAIT MATERIALS

A wide range of food materials can be used as baits to entice pigs into traps. Pigs are highly attracted to fermentation odours such as rotting fruits or meat material. Highly odorous bait material will entice pigs from a distance as they have a highly developed sense of smell; similar to a dog's power of smell.

Bait material should also be readily available at little or no cost as large quantities may be required over extended periods of free-feeding. It may be necessary initially to experiment with a few different baits before one is found that produces good results. In areas where fruit such as bananas, mangoes, pumpkins or rockmelons are available, and especially if pigs are known to be feeding on these crops, can produce good results.

Free feeding meat bait is illegal under Government regulation due to the possible transmission of disease concerns. Animal carcasses or refuse such as food scraps containing meat or meat products must not be used in traps unless the bait is unable to be consumed by the pigs or all pigs are prevented from returning to the wild after feeding.

Grain is often used in trapping situations. Fermenting the grain by soaking in water for at least 3 to 5 days will improve its attractiveness to pigs. If possible, add the stomach contents of cattle as this contains yeast and bacteria culture which will ferment the grain to produce a pronounced odour attractive to pigs. Adding meat meal will also add a rotting meat odour to the grain. Molasses is frequently added to fermented grain to further enhance the palatability of the bait material. Fermentation should occur within 24 hours but at least 3 to 5 days is best before using the grain for pre-feeding. Fill the drum no more than three quarters full as the grain will swell. When the process is working correctly the grain will have a very pronounced (obnoxious) odour. An animal food additive called CARASWEET (Agricon Products) will enhance the attractability of bait material. This sweet smelling attractant is useful when added to dry grain or bait material that has low palatability as pigs are highly attracted to the vanilla odour.

The addition of food additive dyes to bait material has been shown to reduce birds eating the bait material and/or prematurely setting off the trap trip mechanism. Research has shown that bait material dyed black or green reduced the consumption of grain by birds by up to 80%. Dying the bait material will help prolong the length of time between replenishing and reduce the trapping effort and costs.

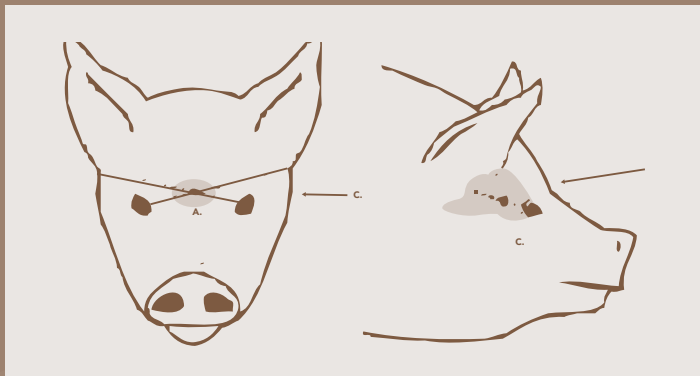
HUMANE TRAPPING AND DESTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Trapping of pigs can be a humane method of control when traps are inspected at least once daily and they are set up to provide shade and shelter. Pigs have poor thermoregulation and can suffer greatly when exposed to extremes of heat and cold.

The trap should be constructed in a way so as not to cause injury from loose wire, sharp edges or malfunctioning gates. Also, a smaller mesh size should be used to prevent injuries to the pigs' snouts if they charge at the trap when attempting to escape. The recommended mesh size should be no larger than 100mm x 100mm. Alternatively if using larger mesh size then wire netting can be used inside the mesh to stop charging pigs from cutting their snouts on the mesh. This netting will also prevent piglets from escaping and dying from starvation if the mother is destroyed. If lactating sows are caught in a trap without their young, efforts should be made to find dependent piglets and kill them quickly and humanely.

Trapped pigs must be destroyed by shooting as quickly and humanely as possible. The shooter should quietly approach the trap to avoid panicking the trapped pigs. A sudden rush of panicking pigs can break out of even the strongest trap. The shooter should avoid any delay near the trap and promptly destroy the pigs. The primary objective when shooting trapped pigs is to achieve instantaneous loss of consciousness and rapid death without regaining consciousness. For trapped pigs a .22 calibre is sufficient if using head shots. Personnel should know the aiming points to penetrate the brain to achieve a sudden and painless death.

(Ref: http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/4790_8338.htm).



(A) indicates the frontal method for firearm and captive bolt, (B) indicates the temporal method suitable for firearm only. The dots indicate the point of aim and the arrows indicate the direction of aim.

Frontal method:

Aim horizontally at the point of interception of lines taken from the base of each ear to the opposite eye.

Temporal method:

Aim horizontally from the side of the head at a point midway between the base of the ear and the eye.

Poll method:

Aim behind the head at a point midway along a line drawn from the base of each ear. This method can only be used if the shooter is above the animal.



Panel trap with a vertical swinging door. Note the small mesh size (75mm x 50mm) which reduces damage to panicking pigs charging the mesh and also ensures piglets cannot escape.



This is an example of a poorly designed trap. Large mesh size is inhumane causing injury to charging pigs and lets piglets escape to die of hunger or dehydration. No shade is available, insufficient pickets and the trap height is too low allowing pigs to climb out.



In this example a roof of wire netting is used to stop pigs from climbing or jumping out.



A small fence is used in this example to channel pigs towards the entrance.

Incorporating a trap into a fence line will also assist in channelling pigs toward the trap.



Pickets driven in at a 45 degree angle are more secure, especially in soft ground, and stop pigs lifting the trap to escape. Note the pipe sections welded to the end of the panels to allow a picket to hold the panels together.



A drop door is used in this example. The weight of the door may pose a danger to personnel working at the trap and to entering pigs and other animals. This type of door is not recommended.

Acknowledgements

This manual contains practical advice on feral pig control strategies for land managers in the North Queensland Dry Tropics. This initiative is funded by the Australian Government - Caring for our Country, supported by NQ Dry Tropics.

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Trapping of Feral Pigs

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Please reference as:

Mitchell, J 2011, *Trapping of Feral Pigs*, NQ Dry Tropics, Townsville.

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