



Hon Ken Baston MLC
Minister for Agriculture
and Food

24/9/13

MEDIA STATEMENT

Launch of Rangelands wild dog bounty trial

- **State Government to fund trial bounty offering \$100 per wild dog scalp**
- **Aim to reduce wild dog attacks and help pastoralists improve profitability**
- **Trial over 88,000sqkm of pastoral land in the Murchison area**

Agriculture and Food Minister Ken Baston has announced a \$75,000 trial bounty to control wild dogs in the Murchison region.

The trial is designed to reduce wild dog attacks on sheep and cattle.

It will target an 88,000 square kilometre region encompassing more than 50 stations, which are all part of a proposed Murchison Region Vermin cell.

Under the trial, pastoralists will be able to claim \$100 per wild dog scalp.

DNA samples will be collected and examined to improve knowledge about WA's wild dogs.

Mr Baston announced the trial at Challa Station, near Mount Magnet, this morning.

The Minister said \$50,000 of the funds would be allocated to the payment bounty; the rest would cover administration, monitoring and a review of the trial's success.

"This is an important initiative to protect livestock in this area, where wild dogs have reached unprecedented levels," he said.

"They not only kill and mutilate sheep but are growing bold enough to take on young cattle. The damage done to livestock by wild dogs is absolutely horrific.

"There have been calls from some pastoral and agricultural areas for a bounty to be paid to boost efforts to reduce wild dog numbers. I'm responding with a trial aimed at testing the value of a bounty system in Western Australia."

In an industry-led initiative, the trial will be run by the Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association under contract arrangements with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

"Only pastoralists will be allowed to claim bounty payments, but they can provide permission to external parties to kill wild dogs on their properties and pay them privately," Mr Baston said.

The bounty will be in addition to existing wild dog management activities, to ensure any benefit derived from the scheme can be clearly measured.

The State Government's Royalties for Regions program funded an upgrade to the State Barrier Fence and has committed to extensions at Yilgarn and Esperance. Eight additional doggers have been employed - bringing the total number in WA to 25 (part-time and full-time).

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Fact File

- **Wild dogs impact directly on livestock enterprises through stock deaths, injuries and lower reproduction rates**
- **The Pastoral Lands Board reported 42,258 stock - mostly sheep - were lost in 2012 due to wild dogs across the Rangelands**
- **The value of stock lost in the Rangelands due to wild dogs was reported at \$7.7million in 2011 and \$6.3million in 2012**
- **The State's sheep flock has dropped 46 per cent from 26 million in 2005 to 14.4 million in 2012. Other factors contributing to the reduction include feed and water shortages, costs, availability of labour and variable meat and wool returns**

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