

ADDENDUM

FERAL CAT CONTROL SEMINAR - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP RESULTS

QUESTION: **Should there be a bounty on cats?**

Response Variable: Yes but - who pays
- adverse publicity
No Past experience poor
May maintain breed population
Open to abuse

Likely use: probably could only be used in final stages of last cat eradication: that is, would be used to bring those last few cats that previous trapping and baiting and shooting had missed.

Caveat: Short period of time say 3 months to limit breeding opportunities.
No advance publicity
Have to be brought in alive
Suggest \$100 - \$200 per cat

QUESTION: **Should K. I. have different quarantine requirements to the mainland ?**

100% Agreed - In a perfect world. The ensuing discussion became entwined with No cats brought to K.I., no domestic cats allowed to breed on K.I., desexed, chipped and tattooed cats may be still allowed to be brought on to satisfy the domestic demand, and subsidies almost certainly needed.
Finally the discussion led to quarantining more than just cats and that some sort of quarantine demands or station needed for tourists and new-comers alike. (eg foxes, rabbits, hamsters and pigs etc)

The current problem is : No-one is policing
Difficult to police.

QUESTION: **Should we act now or await developments ?**

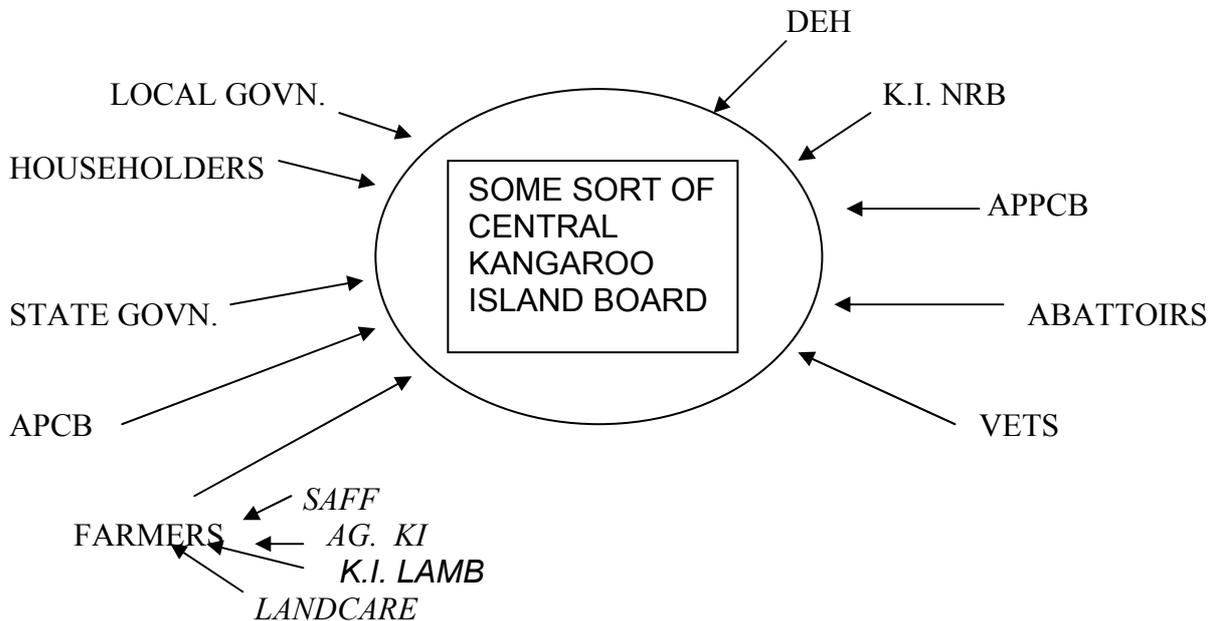
Act Now ! We could trial the new baits from W.A. and the Feline attractant from Vic. We could trial the different traps. All trials to assess suitability to Kangaroo Island.
We should do what we can to keep down the level of cat density in the bush (traps, dogs and shooting).
We should start an education program.

QUESTION: **Where would we find high density feral cat populations and their sources ?**

High density: Jetties and Landings – where fishermen leave offal and fish bait.
Coastline – washed up birds and fish
Picnic areas
Farm houses/sheds/haystacks
Council rubbish dumps, household rubbish, farm killed offal,
Roadside kills, domestic cats, abandoned buildings and car bodies

QUESTION: Who should be the responsible Agencies for all cats ?

The stake holders who need to show leadership in Legislation, Dollars, Education:



QUESTION: Legislation – should cats have legal identity ?

YES !! Identified issues such as desexing, I.D., curfew, once-off Registration, incl. Breeders, policing and controls on entry to K.I.
 Define owned and unowned cats and dogs.
 Penalties for Lawbreakers
 Legalities for handling and despatching ‘unowned’ cats
 Hand in glove with “Joe Public’s” education.

QUESTION: What are cats strengths and weaknesses ?

Weaknesses
 Creature of habit
 Curious nature
 Susceptible to cold temperature
 Winter trap susceptibility
 Driven by smell
 Obligate carnivores
 Long Kitten dependence
 i.e. blind 11 days
 Dependent for another 3 – 4 months
 Hydrophobic

Strengths
 Multi-skilled
 Amazing hunter
 Intelligent
 Quick learner
 Good mobility
 Wide diet
 Efficient breeders
 Scavenges carcasses
 resilient
 Low natural predation
 No Governing Law
 Solitary Animal
 Adaptable breeder
 Timid and Man Shy
 Emotive Human supporters

QUESTION: Should we have a ‘Last Cat’ policy on Kangaroo Island ?

Another resounding YES ! Not surprising really as people were attracted to the meeting because they were concerned or worried about the impact of cats on K.I. fauna. Especially after hearing what Rismiller and Paton had to say.

Inherent in the answer to this question was the fact that everyone wanted Feral Cats eradicated and that the domestic cat population was feeding into the feral population by deliberate dumpings or accidental wandering . And that there are enough irresponsible people out there that could only feasibly be overcome by a Last-Cat policy.

Will need considerable education and 100% public and local Government support.

The carrot to be offered would be that only desexed cats would be brought back onto K.I. as soon as eradication was achieved, from licensed breeders.

QUESTION: Should unowned cats be declared a Pest on Kangaroo Island ?

An almost unanimous YES ! Much discussion about owned and unowned and brought into the light desexing, microchip, cat enclosures, cat curfew, registration and whatever happened to the K.I. Dog and Cat Management Review at Local Government level ?

Cats should be treated the same as dogs – Registered and controlled.

If ‘unowned’ then treated as a Pest.

Unowned may be defined as not on the owners land, or not identifiable or both.

This issue will need considerable diplomatic skills !! It will need considerable education for “Joe Public” on what is responsible pet ownership. Combining dogs and cats in the same breath (i.e. using words like ‘pet’ or ‘domestic’) will help focus the mind on the issue.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS : WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TODAY ?

Clearly Feral Cats are having an impact on practically all native species, including the K.I. icons, the Short Beaked Echidna and Rosenberg’s Goanna.

Dr. Peggy Rismiller implicated a dozen native mammals, 30 odd native birds, 9 reptiles as well as frogs and insects as part of the feral cats’ diet. She indicated that current levels of predation will drive some (including Echidna and Goanna) to extinction.

Peggy gave us some idea of cat ranges (lactating females >2 sq. kms.) and male cats roam over >5 sq.kms

Dr. David Paton indicated cat densities at Murray’s lagoon at around 0.6 cats/hectare. Cat size was less than the mainland suggesting that food may be harder to come by or that cat densities are higher or that many youngsters survive bringing average weights down. It might also mean that many cats do not survive for too long (snakes, guns & dogs ?) and that if we were to take offal and carcasses out of the equation it would make things even tougher.

Certainly intense trapping reduced numbers successfully and recolonisation was fairly rapid if the pressure reduced. David also showed that cats are more readily trapped in winter/spring (as at Roxby Downs). Trapping however, is only for the committed but will play a key role in any eradication programme.

Katherine Moseby demonstrated that fencing and trapping still works even over broad (15,000) acres but at a price (\$10,000/km) which had to be rabbit proof as well. Continuous external trapping using audio lures and soft traps shows recolonisation of cats would occur at around 20 per year but for the fence.

Bree Galbraith introduced us to aerial baiting using a “WA small roomeat” sausage containing 1080. She showed that “fox-off” 1080 bait was very effective at killing cats and foxes if not buried as the makers suggests. The sausage was also effective in reducing fox and cat activity to zero before recolonisation started about 1 month later. This baiting took place over 4000 sq. km. I.e. close to the size of K.I. Now we’re getting somewhere !! Next trial will be something several times the size of K.I. Suddenly eradication does not look all that far away.

Dr Graeme Moss told us that the Victorians have a felid specific toxin (FST) which gives us the advantage of getting rid of all the Lions and Tigers on the Island as well as the cats. He suggested that DEH are investigating the commencement of trials, some of which will involve the community at various levels.

WHAT NOW ? well 75 people attended today’s Seminar (not including Speakers and Rotarians) and we had many, many apologies and phone calls of support. From the Workshop it was clear that action is needed and it’s needed now. From the interest in getting further copies of the proceeding (40) and the number of people indicating a willingness to help (at least 16), this meeting clearly demonstrated that the community is keen to accept some ownership for the feral cat issue and do some thing about it. Lots of positives and positive people.

There have been two negatives:

1. There were very few genuine farmers there today and the farming community have much to offer and much to loose from feral cats in terms of meat condemnation and abortion/infertility.
2. Local Government has stalled on the issue of giving cats Legal Identity in the community.

A SUGGESTED ACTION PLAN FOR KANGAROO ISLAND FERAL CATS – BY
ROTARY K.I.

Call a meeting of the 16 people mentioned as interested, and, as an Agenda Item, propose that at least 6 or 7 Sub-Committees form to act on or further fine tune suggestions and ideas that came out of the Workshop.

These Sub-Committees and their roles may look like this:

<u>Education</u> :	Local Government Farmers Householders Schools Tourists	<u>Action Now</u> :	Control: Traps Trials : Attractants Traps Bait Types Eradication: Liase with DEH
<u>Research</u> :	Liase with DEH Radio Collars Overseas results Monitoring & Collation	<u>Legislation</u> :	Local Government K.I. Quarantine Lord Howe Is. Experience
<u>Financial</u> :	Raise Money Source Money - Tourism NHT DEH	<u>Leadership</u> :	Locally (Publicity) Media SA & Aust Liase with DEH

This list is NOT exhaustive and hopefully will be expanded or contracted as the meeting feels.

So Rotary will now sign off on the meeting of the 18h February 2003 and it's information. K.I. Rotary will now facilitate the next step which is to call a meeting of the Feral Cat Action Group.

Andrews	Richard	9559 5054	Jubilee Ave.,	5220
Bazoche	Torsten	8553 2783	P.O.Box 484,	5223
Berris	Steve	8553 8210	RSD 107	5223
Dunn	Jenny & Leon	8559 4204	Box 10	5220
Hobbs	Cherry	8553 1340		
Jackson	Garth	8553 2078	7 Centenary	5223
King	Simone	8553 1103	c/- P.O.	5222
Langan	Chris	8553 2498		
Lierich	Nikki	0438 831750		
McDonald	Mary	8553 1432		
McDonald	Scott	8553 7167		
Mussared	Bec	8553 9112		
Reddin	Jack	0429 813344		
Rismiller	Peggy	8553 7174		
Lashmar	Ann	8553 1056		5222

If you are not on the list and you would like to be then contact Jack Reddin – we'd like to have you on board.