

Rabbit control baitlayers

REDUCING PEST IMPACT IN THE NORTHERN AND YORKE NRM REGION



What is a baitlayer?

A bait layer is a machine used in rabbit control. It is towed behind a vehicle and used to lay trails of bait such as oats, where rabbits will encounter them during their normal daily pattern of movement and feeding.

Bait layers come in various forms, and their use depends on the type of terrain where the work is being undertaken and type of vehicle towing them.

All bait layers have the following components:

- A retractable disk to create a furrow;
- A ground-driven delivery system that can be calibrated to deliver a free feed and a poison bait lay;
- A hopper to carry the bait.

Baits should be laid in shallow furrows rather than swath, as a ploughed furrow provides a clear path for accurately positioning subsequent pre-feeds and poison bait.

The rabbit problem

The introduction of the European rabbit has had a profound impact on agricultural production and biodiversity in Australia, including much of the Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management (NY NRM) region.

These impacts include: soil erosion, crop and pasture losses and the destruction of native vegetation and habitat for our wildlife.

Rabbits are prolific breeders and many thousands of rabbits may at times be found in the region.

Rabbit Control in the Northern and Yorke region

The NY NRM Board works in partnership with the community to control the high number of rabbits within the region.

In 2009 alone, thousands of kilograms of baited feed have been laid on bait trails and more than 20,000 warrens have been ripped. Landholders have worked with Board staff to locate warrens and rip those which had been previously opened.

Use of baitlayers has enabled the Board to distribute the bait feed effectively on properties and roadsides over wide areas and in a very cost efficient manner.

Baitlayer hire

The NY NRM Board has baitlayers available for hire. For details about baitlayer hire and rabbit control, please contact the Board on (08) 8841 3400



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Rabbit control calendar

October – December

Time to plan

- Draw a paddock map of warrens or locate with a GPS.
- Spotlight count numbers.
- Contact one of the Boards Local Regional Authorised Officers.
- Organise oats.
- Check your equipment.
- Remember there will be many young rabbits, rabbit numbers peak, crop damage will be most visible and some rabbits may be affected by RHD and the Myxo virus (these viruses are not reliable control methods).

January – April

Poisoning

- Spotlight to count rabbits and check numbers.
- Best time to poison. You can reduce rabbit numbers by 95%.
- Rabbit territories undefended.
- Rabbits are hungry.
- Provide trails of free feeds of non-poisoned oats. Three free feeds are essential. Ensure you have a 3-4 day gap between non-poisoned feeds.
- Wait 3-4 days then lay a poisoned oat trail (for 1080 treated oats) with a baitlayer. The Board has baitlayers for hire. Contact an Authorised Officer, at the Board for advice.
- Proceed to cross rip warrens as soon as practical after the poisoning program.

May – September

Follow up

- Remove debris to avoid future re-colonisation by rabbits, to make present and future warren destruction easier.
- Destroy any exposed warrens.
- Use fumigation if warrens are not accessible.
- **RECHECK WARRENS AND RE-RIP OR FUMIGATE.**
- Spotlight again to check for any remaining rabbits.

WARREN DESTRUCTION IS ESSENTIAL. FUMIGATE TO KEEP WARRENS CLOSED

The Board gratefully acknowledges SAMDB NRM Board in the development of this fact sheet.



For more information

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