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CO-ORDINATED RABBIT CONTROL (USING "1080")

Plans for 1956

By A. R. TOMLINSON, Chief Vermin Control Officer, and J. W. LEIGHTON,
Rabbit Control Scheme Organiser

IN the coming season it is proposed to poison with "1080" most of the rabbit-infested areas south of the East-West railway and comprising chiefly the South-West and Great Southern areas. The Agriculture Protection Board will be employing 14 Rabbit Control Units each consisting of two men, a Land Rover and caravan. These will be grouped in two main batches of six each, with the other two kept in reserve to do small isolated areas as required.

This programme was started in November, 1955, and it is hoped to cover most of the southerly areas by the end of March, 1956. The starting points were Kojonup and Boyup Brook. From here one group worked eastward and southward while the other moved westward and southward. Following this, the units will, if time and weather permit, move upwards and work over all those areas not previously touched. It must be remembered that nothing, (in the vermin field), as large as this has previously been attempted in Western Australia and difficulties are expected to crop up from time to time.

HOW THE FARMER FITS INTO THE SCHEME

The following is a rough outline of how the farmer fits into this scheme.

"1080" is applied to either oats or apples, (with oats for preference), and the bait is laid in a shallow furrow—after the same furrow or trail has been free-fed with unpoisoned bait for a period of not less than three days prior to the day of laying the poisoned bait.

In order to keep the cost to the farmer to a minimum, he is required to cut or plough the furrow and to free-feed it himself. He has also to supply to our men the same bait material as he used for free-feeding, so that it can be poisoned and then laid out for him, according to the Health Department regulations.

Oats are used dry—straight from the bag—and on the first day of free feeding a continuous stream should be laid out in the furrow at the rate of one tablespoonful spread over four to six feet. **A bucketful will feed approximately one mile.** On the following two or three days, the quantity should vary according to how the rabbits consume the feed. If apples are used they should be chopped into cubes about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in size and laid out four to six inches apart—again, the feed should be varied according to consumption.

It is better to slightly over-feed than under-feed. This will ensure that every rabbit has the opportunity to find sufficient feed in the furrow during the free-feeding period.

Free feeding is essential and very necessary to success, and the effectiveness of poisoning depends on the efficiency of free feeding.

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH FARMERS

The farmer will be contacted by our organiser at his home a week or two beforehand. The organiser will arrange with the landholder a suitable time and date to poison his property. If required, he will also arrange to do the property in two stages to allow the farmer to shift his stock after an interval of 12 to 14 days. He will answer further queries and advise on any problems that might be raised.

NOTICE

1080

POISON

**HAS BEEN USED ON THIS PROPERTY
TO DESTROY RABBITS BY THE
AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD**

90952/10/55-4m

This notice, exhibited prominently on a property, indicates a progressive farmer who is participating in the first large scale co-ordinated effort to control rabbits in Western Australia

The farmer will be required to sign a form stating that he will remove his stock from the paddocks to be poisoned and that he will not replace them until the poisoned bait has been picked up or ploughed in.

BAITS LEFT IN FURROWS

The farmer is advised to leave the poison down for at least four days during which time most of the rabbits should have been poisoned if the free-feeding has been done properly. However, the longer the poisoned bait is left down, the nearer to 100 per cent. will be the kill.

If it is necessary to replace stock on to the poisoned area—the furrow should be ploughed back, and the stock may be returned immediately after doing so.

Carcasses.

Probably not more than 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. of dead rabbits will be found on top of the ground. These should be picked up and disposed of by burying or burning. They are a danger, but more so to dogs than other domestic animals. A dead rabbit would not contain sufficient poison to kill a beast or a sheep. They are deadly to foxes.

Cost.

A charge of £2 12s. per hour is made for mixing and laying the poisoned bait. (The minimum charge is £2 12s.). This includes

the operators in a Land Rover, and the cost of the "1080" poison used. The team will lay from three to six miles of poisoned bait per hour, according to the going. The trail should be kept in the open if possible—around warrens and cover—not through it. If the going is too rough for the vehicle, the men will walk, but it takes longer and is not so convenient.

"1080" IS NOT THE COMPLETE ANSWER TO THE RABBIT

"1080" is **not** the complete answer to the rabbit problem. This poison is much more efficient than any other available at present, but it still suffers from the inherent drawbacks associated with all poisons.

It must be followed up with warren ripping, destruction of natural cover and other methods.

The final step on many properties must be exclusion by means of rabbit-proof fencing and total destruction within the netting of all harbourage, including warrens.

A warning of what can happen with a few rabbits left unmolested after poisoning was given on a property where some of the first "1080" tests in Western Australia were carried out. This property has now been poisoned three times in as many years, with "1080." After each poisoning the landholder has promised faithfully to rip up his warrens. In three years this has still not been done, the warrens are active and rabbits numerous. This man is one who is actively pressing for the Department to do two poisonings per year. He claims that once is not sufficient. He is at present netting his farm but until that is completed, he will always have a surplus of rabbits to re-infest neighbouring properties, unless the warrens mentioned, which are in the middle of a cleared paddock are destroyed.

Farmers in many areas have no doubt received a card before this, enquiring if they are interested in having "1080" used on their properties. Whether they are or not, the card should be filled in and returned promptly so that the necessary arrangements may be made well in advance. The next contact will be when the organiser calls at the property and gives instructions about when to start free-feeding. If the farmer has any doubts or

queries, then is the time to bring them forward and ask the organiser before he leaves the property. The landholder will then see no more of the Government men until they arrive on the property to lay the position.

Remember, the farmer is the key man, the success or failure depends on his free-feeding, but, also remember, that any of our officers is at all times ready to supply helpful advice if the farmer should need it.

FARMERS

This is **YOUR** Journal, and it has been written, edited and presented in a sincere endeavour to give you helpful information in an interesting manner.

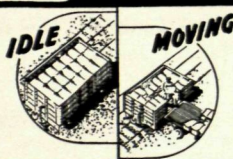
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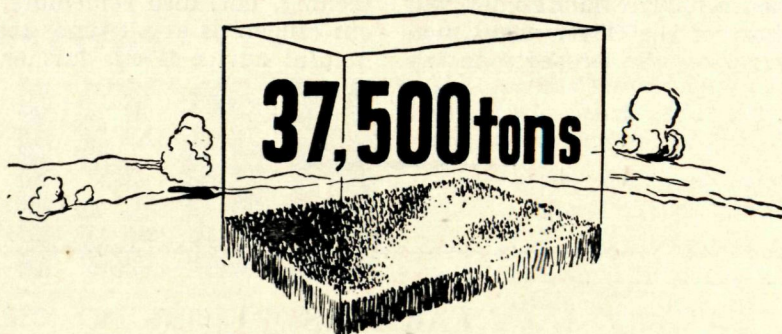
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