



Tracks and Traps



as told by Queensland
sheep and wool producers

Leading the way

for a more profitable Queensland
sheep and wool industry through
new technologies
knowledge and skills



Queensland Government
Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

• **australian wool**
innovation
• **limited**

Leading Sheep is an Australian Wool Innovation initiative in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and supported by AgForce which targets the adoption of new technologies and practices to increase the productivity and profitability of the Queensland industry.

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Cover and e-book design by Ian Partridge

Introduction

The sheep industry has been in rapid decline for several decades in Queensland and, while economic downturns and drought have had an impact, wild dog predation had, and continues to have, an enormous influence. There is an emotional cost borne by graziers who are confronted with their livestock savagely mauled by wild dogs that economics cannot value and townfolk cannot comprehend. It was once described to me by a goat producer as “having your heart in your mouth every time you ventured into your paddocks’ in anticipation of what scene he might come across. He subsequently sold all of his goats because he couldn’t take it any more.

From my 25 years involvement in wild dog management in Queensland, I see multiple reasons why wild dog predation is more debilitating and widespread now than it was in previous decades. In past decades, sheep production was characterised by ubiquitous netting fences, persistently maintained by boundary riders, extensive use of steel-jaw traps, strychnine and then 1080 bait — tools that worked well. Many workmen were employed on grazing properties and were generally skilled fencers, trappers and bushmen. But now the whole nature of the grazing industry has changed.

There are fewer graziers working much larger properties. Graziers rely more heavily on working dogs to manage their livestock so the hazard of using poisons is a great concern to them. There are fewer dog-proof fences. Regulations regarding the use of poisons are more restrictive and fewer properties are baited. Animal welfare concerns together with fewer people skilled in trapping have resulted in less use of traps. Overwhelming this situation is an expansion in the distribution of wild dogs within the former sheep grazing areas. Where wild dogs were last seen in “grandad’s day” landholders must now exercise constant vigilance.

The material and personal accounts contained in the e-book is to advise, educate and give a voice to graziers who struggle with wild dog predation. While cattle producers or, more correctly, those who don’t control their wild dogs are a focus for concern, there is a general lack of knowledge about, and expertise in, the tools we have. This e-book help to address this issue.

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Message from the North and Central West group

On behalf of the North and Central West Leading Sheep committee, I thank all those people who contributed their time and experiences to this edition of “Tracks and Traps”. Without them, it would never have been put together, and the wealth of their experiences may have gradually been lost.

If you feel that your methods or special skills in wild dog control could be of interest and benefit to the wider rural community, please take the time to send your story to one of the North and Central West committee members for possible inclusion in this e-book at a later date.

Virginia Wacker
Coordinator for 2008
‘Alice Downs’
Blackall

This **e-book** is an initiative of the Leading Sheep Central West regional committee and contains stories written by producers, or compiled from their ideas and thoughts. The wild dog book idea was conceived by producer Jan Taylor, the contents collated by Wendy Sheehan and Jenny Keogh, edited and produced by Ian Partridge. Photos have been provided by producers, by Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

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