

Media Release

Floods bring big returns from rabbit control

With floods affecting much of Australia it is time to think about strategic responses for recovery programs. Feral pests – especially rabbits – should feature in the mix according to Rabbit-Free Australia.

‘Floods may be bad news for rabbits, but after waters recede it can be boom time for bunnies – and that’s bad news for the environment and producers’, said Dr Wayne Meyer, Chair of Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia.

‘An abundance of green grass stimulates breeding and booming populations soon follow’.

‘There are big, and long lasting, gains to be had from ripping warrens following floods, preventing them from being quickly re-populated by expanding colonies of rabbits,’ he said.

Floods and wet conditions are driving booms of all sorts of plants and animals, including mosquitoes which, along with flies, spread the rabbit bio-controls myxomatosis and calicivirus.

‘If bio-controls are active, that will further suppress rabbit numbers in the immediate term, but without conventional controls their numbers will rebound and then rocket – and ripping has the best long term pay-off in such conditions,’ said Dr Meyer.

Rabbit-Free Australia is urging governments and community organisations to support landholders in planning and conducting coordinated pest control programs.

‘Feral pests don’t respect boundaries, so it’s best to work with neighbours to avoid reinfestation; and specialist planners are needed to help people plan and work together. That, and helping people put their plans into action, is where governments can assist,’ said Dr Meyer.

The Foundation encourages regional programs that look at rabbits, cats, foxes and weeds together, and contends that assistance of this kind will help people deal with the effects of flooding, lead to improved landscapes from production and biodiversity perspectives, and make regions more resilient.

For more information see their website www.rabbitfreeaustralia.org.au :

- **Latest News** item, ‘Floods – time for rabbit control’ and the fact sheets available there: ‘The Rabbit Problem’ & ‘Rabbit Control’ in Natural Disasters
- [Rabbit Control](#) for advice on planning and conducting rabbit control programs.

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