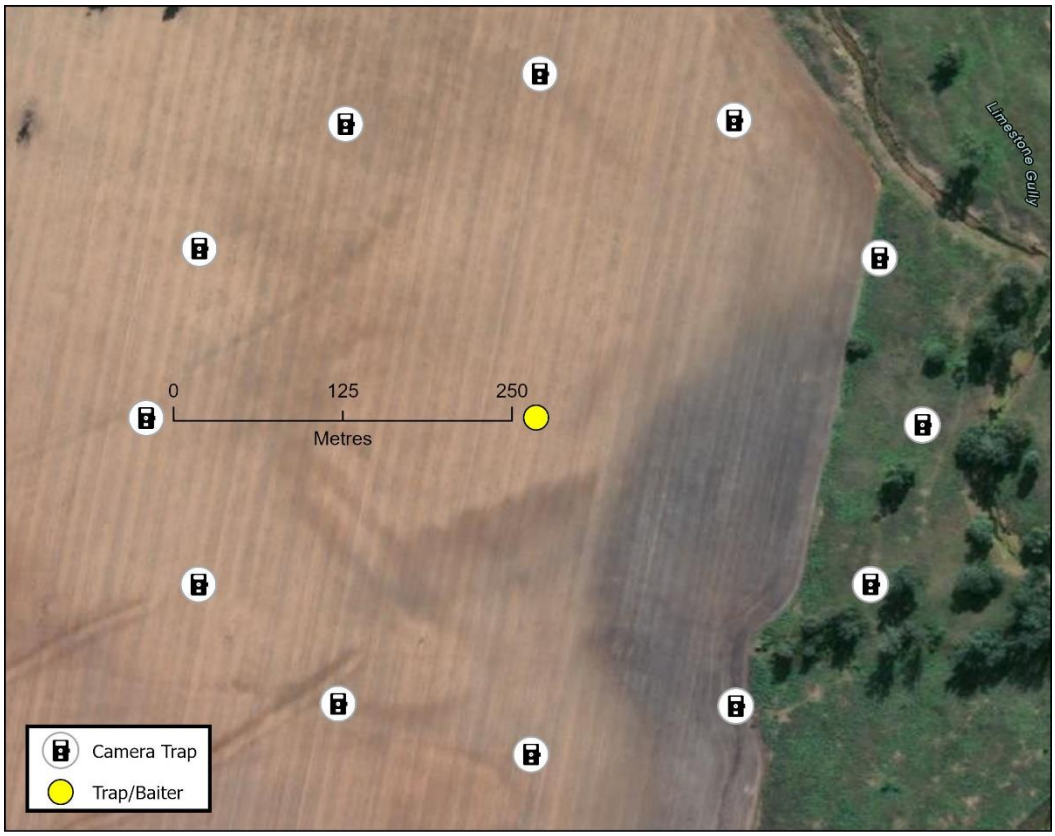
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Setting up a PIGCOUNT survey



Introduction

The PIGCOUNT project uses camera traps and a statistical model to produce a local estimate of feral pig density (i.e. number of feral pigs/km^2).

A ring of 12 camera traps is placed in a 500m diameter circle around a control tool (a pig trap or baiter; Figure 1). During the 2 weeks of pre-feeding the feral pigs they will "randomly encounter" the cameras as they attend the trap/baiter. Using our understanding of how far pigs move in a day, and how many images are taken of feral pigs on the cameras over the 2 weeks we can get an estimate of local density. This is done automatically using a computer program.

After a minimum 2-week pre-feeding period is complete the landholder actively traps/baits – recording the number of pigs removed during this control if they are trapping. The landholder then does another 2 weeks of pre-feeding before running the trap/baiter a second time (the number of pigs removed this second time is not used in the model). Again, during this second

round of pre-feeding, the cameras are taking images – this allows for a second estimate of local density to be calculated.

In both 'baiting' and 'trapping' scenarios, the local density estimates from before and after the control activity can be used to calculate a ratio. For example, the PIGCOUNT estimate before control might be 3.8 feral pigs/km^2, and after control might be 2.2 pigs/km^2.

Materials

1 x Trap/Baiter

12 x Star picket

1 x Star picket driver

12 x Camera L bracket (holes at 75mm)

24 x ¼" 25mm bolts

24 x ¼" Nylock nuts

12 x Camera Swivels

12 x ¼" 10mm bolt

12 x ¼" Split washer

1 x Philips Screwdriver or ratchet

1 x 7/16" Ring spanner

12 x Reconyx HP2X

144 x AA batteries

12 x 32gb Memory card

Field methods

Using the PIGCOUNT app

Interpreting results

Troubleshooting

References