



wheatbelt
natural resource
management



New weapon in the war on cats coming

Feral cats are a serious problem in Australia, and their control is made more difficult by their natural wariness of traps, and reluctance to take baits.

The newly developed Felixer Grooming Trap hopefully will provide a unique solution. Armed with automated control systems the device targets feral cats with 1080 without the need for direct handling of the poison or risking exposure to working dogs or children.

The Felixer Cat Groomer was developed by South Australian ecologist John Read. He has spent many years developing the grooming trap which is designed to only affect cats. It has special sensors which detect the body shape and size of a cat. When the grooming trap senses a cat it sprays toxic gel of 1080 onto the fur of the cat. The cat instinctively licks the gel from its fur, hence ingesting a lethal dose of the poison.

The device can not only detect the presence of a cats, it also uses sounds to attract them. Sounds include that of a cat on heat, a squealing rat and birds in distress.

John Read says that the trap is more ethical than having a cat caught in a leg-hold or cage trap for many hours.

After development in South Australia, the trap commenced trials in Queensland during 2016 to protect the rare night parrot.

More recently a program has started on Kangaroo Island in South Australia trialling the Felixer Groomer Trap. There the grooming traps will be set on both private and public land, with community members monitoring the traps and sensor cameras. It is an opportunity to refine the use of the grooming traps in a variety of terrains. Members of the community will not be handling the toxic cartridges, this will be undertaken by a liaison officer who coordinates and supports the monitoring activities.

Once the safety and efficiency of the trap have been demonstrated through a number of trials it is expected to become available for wider use.



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