NPCA Newsletter

National Pest Control Agencies

IN THIS ISSUE

NPCA provides a forum for agencies and stakeholders involved in possum and vertebrate pest control to cooperatively address industry issues, share information, develop best practice and promote training/professional development. Any individual or organisation engaged in the vertebrate pest control industry is eligible for membership.

The NPCA is run by a management committee of six people and a National Co-ordinator.

Management committee:

Bill Martyn, (Chairperson), *Local Government New Zealand*

Mike Hawes, *Department of Conservation*

Brent Rohloff, *Animal Health Board*

Clyde Holden, *Contractor*

Martin Brenstrum, *Contractor*

Sherman Smith, *MAF*

National Coordinator: Maurice Kennedy

FROM BILL MARTYN, NPCA CHAIRPERSON:

TIMES OF CHANGE CONTINUE

Our next AGM, in November, will be NPCA's first as an incorporated Society and I urge members to attend, as it will be an important opportunity to consider NPCA's future direction in a time of continuing change in our industry.

Members voted at the last AGM for the change of status and the minor change to the name. Now that we are an incorporated society, members have much better legal protection. Changing the name to 'National Pest' rather than 'National Possum' Control Agencies reflects our evolving role in pest management whilst retaining the strong NPCA brand.

We are hopeful that our application to achieve charitable trust status will be completed by the end of the year. Once this has been achieved, more funding opportunities will be available and there are projects already earmarked as potential recipients.

Another change has been the merging of the NPCA and Biosecurity Institute conferences. Although it brings to an end seventeen years of presenting our own very successful technology transfers, the goodwill and energy of both committees displayed so far will guarantee excellent future events with something for everybody.

In strict business terms, the performance of NPCA has been pleasing in the contemporary environment. Brand awareness has increased and NPCA is being seen increasingly as a leader in best practice solutions, expanded through diversification without straying too far from core business – all the while keeping a lid on cost escalation.

I would like to acknowledge the management committee's vision and ability to assess the needs and the change required that keeps NPCA delivering relevant and high quality services to our members.

MAF's Future of Pest Management Toolbox project is underway. This very big exercise is looking at how the industry will manage its information and best practice guidance into the future. In its entirety, the project will address management and governance for all biosecurity activities pre-border, border and post-border. Where NPCA sits in any future regime is still to be determined but there is industry support for the retention of NPCA, with many concerned that its potential loss would be a tremendous waste of a successful model and resources, and a step backwards.

My personal thought for NPCA's future role is one of expansion. If NPCA applied its model to pest plant management as well, it would serve the new toolbox by catering comprehensively for the largest components of post-border biosecurity. Whatever the demands for change or adaptation, NPCA's proven ability to cope will stand it in good stead for future opportunities.

Cheers, Bill

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NOTICE OF AGM—IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP MATTERS TO CONSIDER

We urge members to attend this milestone meeting - our first as an incorporated society!

DATE: 2 pm, Tuesday 22 November 2011

VENUE: The Board Room, Level 9
Animal Health Board,
Guardian Trust House
15 Willeston Street, Wellington

Now that NPCA is an incorporated society, the question of membership has become even more important.

We need to demonstrate that NPCA is seen (through its membership as well as its services) as a significant voice and player within the vertebrate pest control industry. This strong representation could be crucial in shaping NPCA's potential role(s) in the new national pest management structure currently being planned by MAF.

Historically, NPCA was set up to help co-ordinate the efforts of the three key agencies involved nationally in possum control: the Animal Health Board, the Department of Conservation and the Local Government Association. Perhaps because of the close working and financial relationship with these three agencies, who hold 10 votes each under the current constitution, NPCA has always had a relatively small membership. In recent years, membership has stood at around 20 – 30.

We need to look at building our membership base and it will be important to discuss at the AGM how this might be facilitated.

Membership under the current constitution

The membership rules adopted during incorporation were based closely upon those in the old constitution. Currently, there are two types of member:

- *Principal member*:
  - restricted to just three organisations (AHB, DOC and LGA);
  - voting power of 10 votes each.
- *Ordinary member*:
  - open to anyone, subject to discretionary Management Committee acceptance;
  - voting power of 1 vote each.

The weight given to the principal members reflects the importance of the AHB, LGA and DOC in founding NPCA and providing the majority of the operating budgets over the years. However, the funding situation is changing and it may be that the membership categories should be structured differently in future so that all members would feel they had a more democratic say in NPCA affairs. The membership is responsible for making policy decisions and giving direction to the management committee to manage NPCA's operations between annual general meetings.

Membership benefits

The main current membership benefit is having a say and input to the final decisions on NPCA's operating budget, the annual operations programme and project

REMINDER

Why did NPCA became an incorporated society?

The key reasons for NPCA's incorporation included the following.

- Unincorporated societies cannot own property or enter contracts (any property or contracts being held in the individual member(s)' names);
- Members of an unincorporated society can be personally liable for the debts of the body;
- As members own the property of an unincorporated body personally it is difficult to make gifts to an unincorporated body.

The first two points above can make it difficult for unincorporated bodies to increase their membership while the third point can reduce the opportunities for obtaining external funding, thereby limiting the scope of the work the body can undertake.

Why has NPCA applied to register as a charity?

By registering with the Charities Commission, NPCA could benefit from certain tax exemptions on its business income.

NPCA has also applied for donor status so that individuals making gifts of cash of $5 or more would be able to claim a tax credit.

In summary:

- *Incorporation increased NPCA's credibility, as it is now a separate body from its members, with a set of rules that have a statutory basis.*
- *The charitable status and donee status will enable NPCA to increase its profile and increase opportunities for obtaining funding to carry out its stated purposes.*

programme. Otherwise, most of NPCA's services are freely available to members and non-members alike.

The Management Committee acknowledges that there might also need to be other tangible benefits accruing to members, if membership numbers are to increase. The Committee has been looking at incentive options, including:

- free newsletter made available only to members;
- discounted rates for NPCA publications and training courses;
- discounted conference fees;
- negotiated supplier discounts for outdoor clothing and pest control equipment and accessories.

Your feedback is invited — now and at the AGM

We would welcome your ideas and comment on these matters so that we can put as full a proposal as possible to members for discussion and decisions at the AGM in November.

The following questions of principle might be worth thinking about.

- *To what extent are you prepared to be a financial / voting member of NPCA simply to support its unique role in representing the vertebrate pest industry as a whole?*
- *To what extent do you favour having a more democratic voting structure in the membership rules?*
- *What are your views and ideas on introducing a wider range of membership categories with differing membership fees?*
- *What membership benefits would you most like to see?*

NZBI President, Pedro Jensen (left) and NPCA Chairperson, Bill Martyn shake on the signing of the combined NETS conference Memorandum of Understanding.

JOINT NPCA / BIOSECURITY INSTITUTE CONFERENCE 2012

NPCA and the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute will combine their conferences from 2012. The first combined conference will be:

NETS2012 – *Pests in a Dynamic Landscape*

18 – 20 July 2012
Taupo

(Note: the earlier circulated version of this newsletter gave the dates incorrectly as 9 - 11 July 2012)

NPCA Chair Bill Martyn and National Co-ordinator Maurice Kennedy, represent the NPCA on the twelve-person NETS (National Education and Technology Seminar) organising committee. Other committee members come from four regional councils, two Crown Research Institutes and one contracting company.

Key decisions so far include:

- a single integrated registration process;
- discounted conference fees for NPCA members consistent with that of Biosecurity Institute members;
- vertebrate pest content content to be concentrated into the first two days of the three-day conference to make it easier for pest control practitioners to attend.

The joint conference will retain most of the features that have made NPCA conferences so successful over many years: - diverse presentations, field trips, workshops, and short two-minute sound-bite 'gems'.

The committee is also working on ideas to enliven the conference programme to give light relief between the PowerPoint presentations.

The draft programme outline will be finalised at the next organising committee meeting in early December.

Vertebrate pest component

Although the main call for papers will go out in mid-February 2012, NPCA will soon start planning the symposia relating to vertebrate pests and will ask for expressions of interest around several expected themes before the end of 2011.

NPCA is also looking into options for offering training opportunities at the conference, linked in whole or part to unit standards. This training is likely to be based on field simulations of population monitoring methods of leghold trap catch, waxtags and chew cards.

In the meantime, if you have ideas for conference presentations let us know now at:

Email: npca@xtra.co.nz or

Phone Maurice Kennedy: (04) 499 7559

IN THE NATIONAL LIMELIGHT — PEOPLE FROM THE PEST CONTROL INDUSTRY

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOUR

Dr Paul Livingstone, AHB's Tuberculosis Eradication and Research Manager, has been awarded the Queen's Service Order (QSO) for services to veterinary science.

The honour was recommended by farming, government and veterinary interests in New Zealand and overseas in recognition of his outstanding contribution in the ongoing battle to control and eradicate bovine tuberculosis from cattle and deer herds.

Paul first encountered bovine Tb in the early 1970s when, as a newly qualified veterinarian, he began work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) on the West Coast. The disease was at epidemic proportions and he found himself having to oversee the mass slaughter of infected cattle while also trying to advise farmers about the still poorly understood disease.

Possums had been discovered to be Tb carriers only three years before. Infection was thought to be transmitted via pasture, yet it was unknown why cattle became infected, but not sheep. One wintry morning, Paul came across a possum carcass and noticed a cow's lick mark on its frosty back. He wondered whether differences in animal behaviour could account for the differences and, sure enough, subsequent research showed that cattle's natural curiosity made them vulnerable through their active investigation of infected possum corpses.

Paul's early research helped to understand how Tb spread and how to better control possums. It contributed to marked reductions in livestock Tb on the West Coast and elsewhere in New Zealand during the mid to late 1970s.

Paul says the hands-on nature his work on the West Coast was hugely influential in shaping his subsequent career.

"It was a challenge, dealing with Tb in that environment but there was real comradeship amongst the Tb testers and with the farmers. The farmers showed great stoicism in the midst of a bad time. I wanted to do something to make it go away. I wouldn't be as good at the job now if I hadn't been out there opening up possums and looking and thinking."

Inevitably, Paul's job did change from hands-on work to leader-ship and management roles, but it has always remained grounded on proactive research programmes.

In 1981, after completing a Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Paul moved to another problem Tb area - the Wairarapa.

Dr Paul Livingstone and Governor-General Sir Anand Satyanand

IN THE NATIONAL LIMELIGHT (CONT'D)

No longer at the front line, he was now trying to apply the knowledge he had gained from his masterate in two directions: - out to the farmers one way and in to Wellington's head office people the other way.

When MAF corporatised in 1987, Paul moved to head office as Technical Manager for bovine Tb control in New Zealand.

"All of a sudden, I was *it* as far as Tb was concerned. I wasn't ready for it and made a few mistakes while I learnt about the realities of politics. It was a big learning curve."

However, by the time the Animal Health Board was formed in 1989, Paul had added to his scientific knowledge skills in planning and strategy; all of which he took with him to the AHB in effectively the same role.

"AHB started off gradually and then it took off," Paul recalls. "Farmers had been asking questions about where, exactly, the money at MAF was going and they kept meeting regularly with the AHB and expressing their concern. That gave us more power to argue for vector possum control and to get more money."

Paul says it was a pivotal time because, finally, there was co-ordinated planning of the measures needed to stop the problem. Since then, Paul has led the strategic research programme into livestock and wildlife Tb control, which has contributed to AHB's highly successful National Pest Management Strategy.

Looking to the future, Paul sees the opportunity to eradicate Tb from large areas of New Zealand.

"We now have a lot of information from our successes and failures, and we've identified where more research is needed. However, the dilemma with disease control is that success can breed complacency too early. The big risk is whether or not our funders will keep paying. If they don't, we'll be back to the crisis situation of 1978."

POSSUM TRAP WINS GOLD AT BEST NZ DESIGN AWARDS

The Goodnature automatic humane possum trap has earned gold twice-over in the Designers Institute 2011 Best Design Awards - in the non-consumer as well as the sustainable product categories.

"We're particularly pleased to share this recognition with the Department of Conservation," says Goodnature director, Stu Barr. "We developed our self-resetting traps in conjunction with DOC and have been grateful for the support."

Goodnature was originally set up by Craig Bond and Robbie Greig, former university friends who had studied mechanical engineering and industrial design respectively. Robbie had been working for DOC on electronics projects, designing small gadgets in the field and realised there was a gap in the pest control market. The two set about designing their first product, a self resetting stoat and rat trap, and soon brought in former university colleague, Stu Barr to boost the team.

The original stoat and rat trap, named the 'Henry trap' after visionary early New Zealand conservationist, Richard Henry, is now being phased out – to be replaced with a new improved model.

"About 80% of the effort went into the technology development of that first design and not enough into the animal behaviour aspects," Stu says. "We learnt a lot in the development of the subsequent possum trap and decided to start again with the Henry trap."

The award-winning possum trap was tested independently and trialled in the field to ensure that the target animals would behave naturally during trials. The trap met the class A humane standard set by the MAF National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee; the only trap for possums to have met this standard, according to Stu.

Similar field trials of the new stoat and rat trap are now complete and it is expected to be available by March 2012.

Stu says product review and development is a constant process, based on user feedback and their own ongoing observations and testing.

"The traps are working well, for instance, but we're now looking at the auto lure to see if we can bypass the need for supplementary baits."

For more information, visit: www.goodnature.co.nz

Robbie Greig checking a trial site in Sunny Grove, Wainuiomata

BATTLING RABBITS ON FARMLAND? RESEARCH POINTS TO AERIAL 1080 COST SAVINGS

Rabbit densities are now at very high levels, as the effectiveness of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease wanes. These high densities are adversely affecting farm stocking levels, causing soil erosion and damaging natural ecosystems and plant communities. Aerial baiting with 1080 or Pindone remains the most effective method for primary control of rabbits but it is hugely expensive, costing up to $100 per hectare.

The high cost is due mainly to the high quantities of bait being sown to minimise the risk that rabbits are sub-lethally poisoned from eating bait that is variable in size and in toxic loading (i.e. because of poor bait quality).

In a collaborative effort between Landcare Research and the Otago Regional Council, Dave Latham, Graham Nugent, and Bruce Warburton have been looking into refining the operational practices used when aerially sowing 1080 carrot for controlling rabbits on agricultural lands

They examined new bait application methods, aimed at reducing the amount of bait and 1080 used in poison operations. The question was whether these methods could significantly reduce control costs but still achieve high reductions in rabbit numbers.

As a first step, they sowed toxic bait in strips, 75 metres apart, instead of the current practice of broadcasting bait to get complete coverage. They found that the strip method reduces the amount of bait and fixed-wing aircraft flight time required to spread the bait by 66% while still providing sufficient bait for all rabbits within the treated area to obtain a lethal dose. They similarly manipulated the second non-toxic pre-feed in some trials to further reduce the amount of bait and flight time required.

Their findings included the following:

- The experimental treatments were as effective at reducing rabbit numbers as the current practice of broadcasting bait.
- The amount of bait spread on treated properties was reduced from 30 kg per hectare to 10 kg per hectare (i.e. a 66% decrease), with similar proportional reductions in the amount of 1080 used per hectare.
- Costs were reduced by 25% when this method was applied solely to the toxic application.
- Costs were reduced by 50% if the new sowing methods were applied to one pre-feed and the toxic application.

The initial trials have shown great promise in reducing rabbit control costs using 1080. In subsequent years, the research team aims to assess the efficacy of reducing the sowing rates still further (e.g. 5kg/ha), and whether increasing the concentration of 1080 from the current best practice of 0.02% to 0.04% will enable even lower sowing rates to be effective.

NOTICES

DOC SOP'S ONLINE

DOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are now available on the Department's website, www.doc.govt.nz

The online documents will be updated as amendments occur.

Search on website under: Publications / Science & Technical / DOC procedures and SOPs.

REMINDER: ADDITIONAL LEG-HOLD TRAP

RESTRICTION

Since 1 January 2011, use of double-coil leg-hold traps of size 1 ½ has not been allowed, unless they are padded models.

For more information see:

- page 24 of NPCA publication A4.1, *Leghold Traps, A guidelines for capturing possums, ferrets and feral cats using leghold traps* or
- the Animal Welfare (Leg-hold Traps) Order 2007.

[CORRECTION: the first version of this newsletter was circulated with the above date shown incorrectly as 2012.]

SPOT THE TELL-TALE CLUES — PEST ANIMAL SIGN RECOGNITION PROJECT

Which animal left these signs? If you don't know, then you may find NPCA's planned new publication a help — an illustrated guide for those seeking to identify the presence of pest animal species through animal sign left in the field. If you do know, you may be able to help with the current stage of compiling images and information ...

The guide will be based around photographic and line drawing illustrations of the animal sign, with supporting text.

The project is to be conducted in three stages:

1. Identify sources of existing information and potential illustrations.
2. Assess the existing sources, identify and fill the gaps.
3. Compile and publish.

At this stage, the species we envisage will be covered in the guide are:

Brown hare	Hedgehog
Brushtail possum	House mouse
Chamois	Norway rat
Deer (several species)	Rabbit
Dog	Ship rat
Feral cat	Stoat
Feral goat	Thar
Feral pig	Wallaby
Ferret	Weasel

We're seeking assistance with sourcing potential information and/or illustrations on the whole spectrum of sign including:

- animal tracks,
- pellets,
- vegetation browse,
- signs of disturbance,
- nests/burrows,
- typical signs of predatory kill etc.

Do you or does your organisation have any material could be contributed to the project, or know of any other good sources?

If so, please contact Shona McCahon (NPCA's newsletter editor) who has been contracted to carry out Stage 1 of the project: to compile the available existing resources.

Contact Shona at:

Email: shona.mccahon@clear.net.nz
Phone: (04) 970 7573
Mobile: 021 413 2930

NOTE: as part of the exercise, we will be noting any conditions of use that might apply such as copyrights and copyright fees. NPCA is, of course, looking to keep the costs down so if material can be supplied free of charge that would assist with funding the project.

Answers to 'Spot the Sign'

Left: Possum-browsed and un-browsed punga (Source: NPCA A3 *Landowners' Guide to Possum Control)*. **Centre:** Possum droppings (Source: NPCA A3 *Landowners' Guide to Possum Control)*. **Right:** Cat footprints (Source: A11 *Feral and Stray Cats, Monitoring and control: A preliminary guide)*

CORRECTIONS FROM THE LAST NEWSLETTER

Publication date

Our last newsletter, # 25, was circulated with the incorrect publication date of April 2010 in the header. It should have been April 2011.

Photo credit

We were given the wrong credit for the wonderful deer image (right), published on page 3, Issue #25. It should have been credited to Samantha Titze, Biodiversity Threats Ranger with DOC. Samantha captured the moment during the deer roar in 2010, while setting possum traps on the Pukutukutuku Peninsula, Lake Waikaremoana. Our apologies, Samantha.

AHB'S VECTORTRAX MONITORING SYSTEM ABOUT TO LAUNCH

The Animal Health Board (AHB) is in the process of implementing a new handheld software system, named VectorTrax, to monitor more closely the Tb status of an area's wild animal population.

The VectorTrax software runs on a handheld PDA (personal digital assistant) device that is esspecially designed to store and process the information gathered, along with the trap and capture locations.

Pest control contractors using possum, stoat and ferret traps can use a GPS mapping system to map out the location of each trap in a ground-based control area and then use the software to return to the exact location to monitor the trap status and clear the captured wild animals.

The data is transmitted directly to the VectorNet recording system for processing. The information will be vital in keeping tabs on the status of Tb-infected wild animals and planning future pest control operations.

Work on the handheld device project began in September 2010, aided by contractor involvement with testing of the PDA units.

PDA training

AHB is rolling out the VectorTrax system to its contractors in several stages.

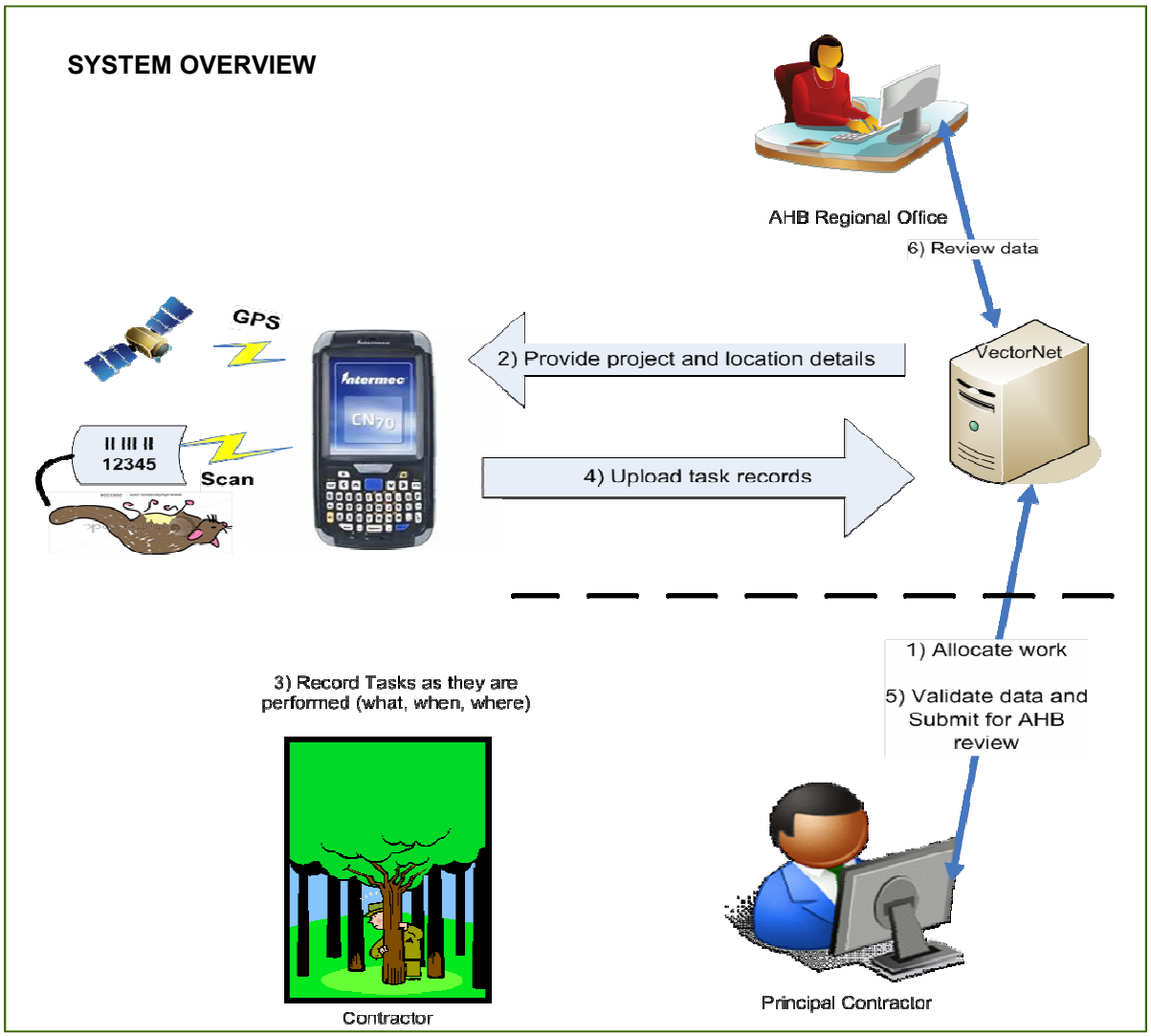
Eurotafts has been contracted to organise and deliver the training of vector control contractors in the use of the PDAs and has been working closely with AHB project manager, Brendon McMullan. The course director is Diederik Meenken with tutor support being provided by AHB staff, Campbell Fleury, Chad Russell and Cindy Hewson.

In October, fifty-seven vector control contractors and staff participated in three PDA training courses run at venues in Christchurch, Palmerston North and Taupo.

During November two further course are planned, with possible further courses in early December.

A second stage of the VectorTrax roll-out, with associated training, is expected in early 2012.

Start date for the contractors trained so far to be able to start using PDAs is 1 November 2011.

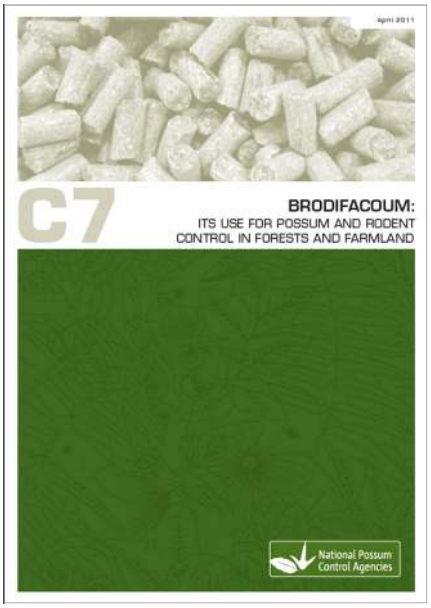


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The following publications have been either updated or released as new publications since our last newsletter in April 2011. All are available online or can be ordered in printed format from NPCA at www.npca.org.nz.

NEW PUBLICATION

Brodifacoum: Its Use for Possum and Rodent Control in Forest and Farmland *(Code C7)*

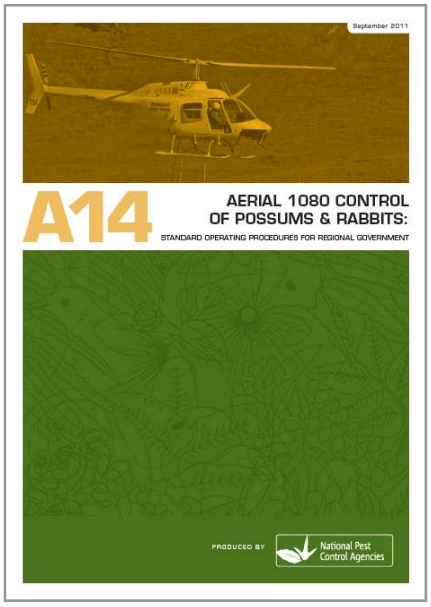


This new addition to NPCA's public awareness series was published in August 2011. It outlines brodifacoum use for possum and rodent control, including information on how it works, what it looks like, the risks to humans and animals and how to keep safe when using it.

12-page A45 colour booklet

NEW PUBLICATION

Aerial 1080 Control of Possums & Rabbits: Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Government (Code A14)

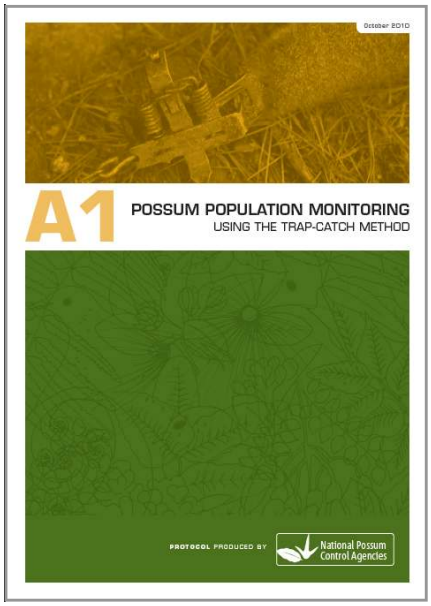


This new title provides guidance for those who plan and manage aerial 1080 operations for local government interests, in carrying out the operational steps involved. This SOP is designed to be read and used together with the (B9) *Aerial 1080 Pest Control Industry Guidelines* and should not be used on its own.

42-page A4, coloured cover with black & white content.

UPDATED EDITION

Possum Population Monitoring using the Trap-Catch Method (Code A1)



Specific sections in this protocol have been updated in response to particular issues and suggestions.

The amendments are summarised in the Appendix.

44-page A4, coloured cover with black & white content.

PAPP AND ZINC PHOSPHIDE BROCHURES DUE OUT SOON

Brochures about the two new pest toxins, PAPP and Zinc Phosphide, are imminent—awaiting approval of final details such as product labels. Watch the NPCA website where the new brochures will be made available as soon as possible. PAPP is registered for use against stoats and feral cats; zinc phosphide is registered for possum control use.