

BACKGROUND

You have received a Notice of Direction issued under section 122 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. This notice requires to you control possums on your property to 10% or less (sample mean) Residual Trap Catch by the date stipulated on the notice.

STRATEGY RULE

Under the Biosecurity Act 1993, the Taranaki Regional Council has prepared the *Pest Management Strategy for Taranaki: Animals*. Within this strategy there is a rule which is specific to properties within the Self Help Possum Control Programme:

‘6.2.2.4 (a) For properties included in the Self-Help Possum Control Programme, the land occupier is required to effectively control brushtail possums on that land.’

‘Where, ‘effectively control’ means to kill, cause to kill, or otherwise dispose of possums and to reduce population levels on a property to 10% Residual Trap Catch (sample mean), or below.’

WHAT IS 10% RESIDUAL TRAP CATCH (sample mean)?

The Residual Trap Catch Index for possum infestation levels on a property is measured according to the national protocol for trap catch monitoring of possum populations.

The Taranaki Regional Council traps and records the number of possums caught; the number of non-target animals such as rats and number of sprung (empty) traps on a property.

Lines, generally of 10 traps (traps are set 20m apart) are set along randomly selected possum habitat areas, such as scrub or bush cover. The number of trap lines set on a property will depend on the size of and the amount of possum habitat on the property.

Trap lines are checked every morning for two or three days and the catch is recorded as above.

The number of possums caught over the period determines the Residual Trap Catch for the property. This is recorded as a percentage.

Example:

Two trap lines are set on a property. Each line has 10 traps set for 3 nights.

10 traps x 3 nights = 30 trap nights x 2 trap lines = 60 trap nights.

10% of 60 is 6 possums.

Therefore a 10% Residual Trap Catch (sample mean) in this example would be 6 possums caught.

The Residual Trap Catch Index is the only legally defensible possum monitoring technique used.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Your options to undertake the work are either to employ an approved contractor (a list of contractors is available from the Council), or to carry out the work yourself.

Once notified that the control work has been completed or the Notice of Direction expires, a Pest Management Officer will in most cases trap your property according to the Residual Trap Catch Protocol.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RESULT IS OVER 10% AND I FAIL TO COMPLY?

Failure to comply with a Notice of Direction is an offence under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and may result in the following action being taken:

- Default Control. This is where the Taranaki Regional Council carries out control on the property and invoices the occupier for all costs involved (Typical costs range from \$3,000 - \$5,000).
- Prosecution under Section 154 (R) of the Biosecurity Act 1993, or
- Both of the above.

For further advice or information about pest animal management contact:

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