

Farmers vs Ferals



K-6, Naradhan Public School

Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

Farmers vs Ferals

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Teacher: Lee-Ann Thomson

School: Naradhan Public School

WARNING: This book contains images that may be distressing to some readers.

Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land Services



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Contents

Introduction	3
Robert Haddrill	
Controlling pigs and galvanised burr	4
Sam and Tara Homfray	
Controlling feral pests	5
Craig Bowes and Dee Wilkes-Bowes	
Controlling feral pigs	6
Mick Little	
Dealing with weeds on the farm.....	7
Timothy Wild	
Controlling feral foxes, pigs and weevils.....	8
Shaun Golding	
Dealing with feral pests on the farm.....	9
Anthony Blacker	
Feral rabbits and pigs	10
A bit about us	11



Introduction

Naradhan is a small rural town in Western NSW.
All our employment is through farming.

The threat that feral animals present to farming is huge. They destroy the crops, the ground, water supplies and also kill livestock.



A feral animal is an animal that is not native to Australia and threatens the natural environment. There are over 80 animals that have been identified as feral in Australia. We have many feral animals in the Naradhan area, including pigs, goats, rabbits, cats and foxes.

There are also a lot of weeds that are not native to the area. These also threaten crops and can kill animals if they consume them.

This book is about how our local farmers (who are also our school families) are dealing with this feral threat. It is the farmers versus the ferals.



Galvanised burr

Robert Haddrill Controlling pigs and galvanised burr

Feral pigs are an environmental problem because they dig up, destroy and wreck crops, spread weeds and sometimes kill young lambs. Robert uses baiting, trapping and culling to control the feral pigs.

Galvanised Burr needs to be controlled because it takes over the pasture, reducing the amount of feed for livestock, and it also contaminates wool. Robert uses spot spraying with chemicals called herbicides to control the weed.

Sam and Tara Homfray Controlling feral pests

Tara and Sam don't like putting down feral pigs, but if they don't, the pigs will get out of control and dig up all their farming land and destroy the environment. Tara uses clever strategies to catch the pigs in mesh traps. She also kills feral rabbits, cats and foxes.

Sam sometimes uses 1080 (a type of poison) to kill the feral pigs. He takes the pigs out of the trap and takes them away to kill them. He doesn't like hurting any animals, so he kills them quickly. He would get rid of anywhere between 5 and 30 feral pigs each week. He also deals with feral cats and foxes.





Craig with a pig trap.



Dee holding poisoned grain to put in the trap to catch feral animals.

Craig Bowes and Dee Wilkes-Bowes Controlling feral pigs

Craig and Dee are local farmers in the Naradhan area. They have a hard time in droughts as feral pigs use food and water that they need for their livestock.

Craig and Dee put 1080 (a poison) onto grain to bait and kill the pigs. They also use trapping and shooting to control these feral pests. Feral pigs dig around the bases of native plants and dig up crops. Craig and Dee have a responsibility to their neighbours and the law to keep these feral pests controlled. They must make sure feral pigs do not get out of hand and destroy the land and water supplies.

Mick Little

Dealing with weeds on the farm

Mick is a farmer in the Naradhan area. He controls weeds by ploughing them up with the tractor. This is a fantastic way to control weeds because you don't use any chemicals which can kill other things like native insects.

It takes Mick two days to plough his paddock but bigger paddocks will take longer, it also depends on the weather. Weeds need to be controlled because animals can become sick from eating them, and they stop crops and native vegetation from growing.





Timothy Wild

Controlling feral foxes, pigs and weevils

Feral pigs eat the crops and dig holes that farmers cannot afford to keep fixing. Feral foxes kill lambs and dig dens that cause stock to break their legs when grazing in paddocks. Weevils eat the wheat that farmers' produce, which stops the farmers being able to sell the wheat to make money.

Local farmer, Tim Wild, has to eliminate these pests to have a viable farm. He controls the feral foxes by spotlighting and hunting them at night. He kills feral pigs by poisoning or shooting them. Tim treats weevils with a chemical that he puts in the wheat silos.



Shaun Golding Dealing with feral pests on the farm

Shaun Golding deals with many feral pests including wild cats, pigs, goats, rabbits and foxes. These animals are not native; they destroy the environment as well as the farm by digging holes and destroying vegetation. Goats and pigs cause the most damage to Shaun's crops.

Shaun controls feral pigs and goats by shooting them. Sometimes he rounds the goats up and sells them.

Anthony Blacker Feral rabbits and pigs

Local farmer, Anthony Blacker, says unless pests are controlled they are very costly to primary production.

Rabbits are very destructive in large numbers. They eat crops and dig holes in the ground called warrens.

Another pest in the Naradhan area is feral pigs. Mr. Blacker has had crops decimated and his water supplies contaminated by pigs. He is concerned because feral pigs carry disease and destroy fencing.





The entrance to our town.



The grain silos and railway track. This is where all the farmers bring their grain at harvest time. It is in the middle of our town.

A bit about us

Naradhan is a rural town in western New South Wales. We are a country town, reliant on our farming for employment and income. We need to keep feral animals and pests off our farms and out of our town as they cause havoc to our environment.

Our nearest shops are half an hour away, major shopping centers are over 100 kilometres away (yes, we are 100 kilometres away from McDonalds or KFC). We all live on farms, working with animals or cropping. All students' families are in this book.



Our school has 13 students from Kindergarten to Year 6; we all work together out of our one classroom. We have one teacher, Ms. Thomson, who is also our Principal. Our Office administrator, Mrs. Ward, is the famous author of *The Big Beet* and *Sally Snicker's Knickers*.

Our school is small but awesome!



This is our town hall, which we use for our end of year presentation.



Beginning on truck step near cabin and going clockwise:
Adelaide, James, Isabelle, Jack, Mylee, Grace,
Lily, Katie, Chloe, Ella, Sienna, Arna, Nia

2015 K-6, Naradhan Public School

CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land
Services

