

Feratox® for wallabies, pigs and ferrets

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Sodium fluoroacetate (1080) use is under pressure and the use of alternatives such as brodifacoum has resulted in extensive wildlife contamination and non-target deaths. Culling of vertebrate pests still relies on the use of unpopular poisons, or poisons that are linked with secondary poisoning or are inhumane. Hence our focus on safer humane poisons. In 1997 Feratox® was approved for possum control in NZ. It is a cyanide pellet which combines improved safety for handlers with low secondary poisoning risk and proven humaneness. As Feratox® has proven humaneness for possum control and we are now increasing the intensity of our efforts to complete the development of cyanide pellets for new species. Our presentation provides an update on the research and development of cyanide. We are focusing on the development of Feratox® for wallabies, ferrets and pigs – and have recently demonstrated effectiveness and humaneness in Dama and Bennett's wallabies, similar to that for possums. Prior to further work on the delivery of cyanide to pigs our research was refocused in 2008 to address questions regarding the susceptibility of pigs to cyanide and define the optimum form of cyanide to kill pigs. This was achieved by administration of a "controlled release" powder formulation of cyanide directly into the mouth of lightly anaesthetised pigs. The new "controlled rapid release" powder was more effective than cyanide pastes or "standard" cyanide powder and pigs were shown to be susceptible to cyanide in this formulation. We are planning further trials with this formulation. Ferrets detect cyanide and we are developing a new pellet/microencapsulated formulation designed to overcome the "unpleasant mouth feel" induced by cyanide powder in ferrets but still deliver appropriate disintegration characteristics. The first new registration package submitted to NZFSA/ERMA will be for Dama and Bennett's wallabies assuming we can build on the promising pen trial data in the field trials we hope to complete in 2009. In parallel we are working on improved delivery systems for possums and wallabies to improve the safety and efficacy of Feratox®.