

Memo

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Date: 2 December 2009
To: Group Manager, Biosecurity Heritage
From: Programme Manager, Biosecurity Operations
Subject: **Three year comparisons of aerial 1080 operations versus other possum control methods - percentage comparisons by area and by cost.**

1. Background

Environment Waikato is sometimes criticised for using aerial 1080 baiting to control possums at the expense of other methods. Staff have completed a study on the comparisons of aerial 1080 with other methods over a three year period – last year, the current year and proposed operations for next year.

2. Results

The following tables show that overall the use of aerial 1080 baiting over the three selected years reduced, both in area and cost.

Table 1. EW contracted services possum control costs – aerial 1080 versus other methods

Year	Total possum control costs (\$)	Aerial 1080 costs (\$)	Other methods costs (\$)
2008/09	1,986,800	326,131	1,660,663
2009/10	1,531,800	116,166	1,415,600
2010/11	1,368,700	76,500	1,292,141
Percentage			
		% aerial (cost)	% other methods (cost)
2008/09	100	16.4	83.6
2009/10	100	7.6	92.4
2010/11	100	5.6	94.4

Overall, costs of the possum programme have reduced as the budget has tightened but the costs associated with aerial 1080 usage have reduced significantly. However, these costs could vary year to year depending on the scheduled time frames for retreatment of large operation areas (e.g. Pirongia / Hauturu).

Over, the costs associated with aerial 1080 baiting compared to ground control operations is about one tenth (e.g. for every dollar spent on aerial 1080, \$9 is spent on ground control methods).

Table 2. EW possum control coverage – aerial 1080 versus other methods.

Year	Total possum control area (ha.)	Aerial 1080 area (ha.)	Other methods area (ha.)
2008/09	105,466	9,287	96,179
2009/10	85,641	4,137	81,504
2010/11	93,567	2,267	91,300
Percentage total			
		% aerial (ha.)	% other methods (ha.)
2008/09	100	8.7	91.3
2009/10	100	4.8	95.2
2010/11	100	2.4	97.6

While the area receiving possum control has slightly dropped the reduction in aerial 1080 **work** by area has been four-fold. This overall decline is clearly shown in the percentage increases for other than aerial methods – 91 percent to almost 98 percent.

Again, these figures could fluctuate depending on the amount of programmed work for any given year.

3. Summary

In concluding this report, overall aerial 1080 operations make up just five percent of all operations carried out, by land area. In terms of costs aerial 1080 operations made up just under 10 per cent of control costs.

This study shows that at least 90 per cent of Environment Waikato's possum work is conducted using ground control.

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