App for all to map pest animals

Farmers and communities can now use mobile phones to map pest animals and document the damage they cause in their local area on a citizen-science website, FeralScan, using mobile phone technology.

Credit: Credit: Invasive Animals CRC

Australia has 56 vertebrate pest species costing at least $1 billion annually in economic, environmental and social impacts.

'This new mobile mapping platform is one of many planned by the Invasive Animals CRC to support farmers and communities to tackle the problems caused by pest animals,' said Andreas Glanznig, CEO of the Invasive Animals CRC.

Peter West, FeralScan project coordinator for the Invasive Animals CRC, said putting this mobile technology directly into the hands of landholders is an important step forward in pest animal control and will help people to map exactly where they see pest animals.

'Having a good understanding of where pests occur and when damage is being caused is essential to make a pest control program cost-effective,' Mr West said.

'The FeralScan citizen science program currently hosts more than 20,000 pest animal records entered by landholders and communities across Australia. Having this technology now going mobile will dramatically increase the value of FeralScan for landholders and communities coordinating onground control programs.

'The data entered in FeralScan is helping people to identify priority areas for pest animal control and help land managers to work together to target pest animal hotspots.

'More than 6000 farmers, land managers, landcare groups, local councils, schools, pest controllers and even grey nomads travelling across Australia have helped to map where rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs, cane toads, myna

birds, feral camels, feral goats and starlings are causing problems. This is helping to build a very good picture of pest animal populations in many regions.

'This first-generation mobile technology does require mobile reception to access the FeralScan website, but the next generation of this technology will work as a free-standing Phone App for recording data without mobile reception'.

Source: Invasive Animals CRC

From **ECOS** online http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC13142