



RSPCA Media Release

Media release date **15/11/2007**

Subject **1080 IS NOT A HUMANE POISON: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL PUBLISHES RSPCA PAPER**

Text A new report into the use of sodium fluoroacetate (or 1080) in Australia has found it is an inhumane poison, and has called for urgent research into improving the humaneness of vertebrate pest control methods in this country.

The report, written by RSPCA Australia's Dr Miranda Sherley, has been published in the current edition of the highly respected Animal Welfare journal from the UK-based Universities Federation for Animal Welfare.

Dr Sherley said despite its widespread use, the animal welfare implications of 1080 baiting have received little attention.

There has been ongoing research into the ecological impacts of using 1080 as well as a high level of public concern regarding the effects of the poison on non-target animals, including pets or working dogs that might accidentally pick up the baits, as well as native wildlife, said Dr Sherley.

However, we were concerned to further investigate what level of pain and suffering was caused by 1080 on any vertebrate animal, including the target animals which, we should remember, are also very much able to experience pain and suffering and deserve no less compassion in the way we deal with them, she said.

Dr Sherley said a range of criteria including studying how the poison works, speed of death, behaviour of affected animals and long-term effects on survivors - were used to scientifically assess how humane the use of 1080 is as a method of pest control.

Human cases of 1080 poisoning are also helpful in understanding the effects on other animals: while conscious, people report feeling pain and distress, and through detailed hospital records we are also able to better track their recovery and any longer term effects, she said.

Based on the evidence available, our conclusion is that animals affected by 1080 do not die a quick and humane death; rather, they suffer a range of potentially painful and distressing symptoms, often over a period of hours, said Dr Sherley.

We can no longer kid ourselves that 1080 is an acceptable option; we urgently need to focus efforts on finding ways to make 1080 more humane, or otherwise finding more humane ways to control pest animals,

Sodium fluoroacetate (1080) is widely used for the control of a range of vertebrate pests in Australia, including foxes, rabbits, dingoes, wallabies, possums, wild dogs and pigs.

A wide range of other animals are also susceptible to 1080 poisoning, including marsupials, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

1080 works by blocking the body's energy supply, causing cells to die and the blood to become more acid. There is no available antidote.

RSPCA Australia is opposed to the use of poisons that cause suffering and/or baiting strategies that are non target-specific. RSPCA Australia believes the available evidence indicates that, in general, the effect of 1080 on animals is not humane.

The RSPCA Australia contact person for media and public relations enquiries is:

Lisa Chalk / Kylie Maloney
RSPCA Australia
Phone: (02) 6282 8300
Mobile: 0419 748 907
Email: lchalk@rspca.org.au / kmaloney@rspca.org.au



PRINT

[Return to RSPCA Media Releases](#)
Copyright RSPCA Australia