

Rabbit infestation in australia research paper examples

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Rabbits have been the worst invasive species that have been reported in Australia. They have widely spread in Australia leading to a massive destruction of the Australian environment. Rabbits have caused devastating effects on the ecosystem since they are believed to be the main factor in species loss in Australia. They have caused a lot of damages on crops and also destroyed and killed young trees and plants. In addition, rabbits cause serious problems on soil making it unproductive. Rabbits feed on native plants leaving the top soil bare and exposed making the land vulnerable to soil erosion. Rabbits have contributed to the thriving of non-native species like feral cats and foxes which have also caused a lot of damage to the Australian ecosystem (Pech and Hood1998). Rabbit infestation in Australia has become an environmental problem because they have destroyed the vegetation and also affected the Australian soil causing soil erosion and this highly affects farming in the continent. They have caused adverse effects mainly on vegetation, native plants, wild life and domestic livestock.

Rabbits were first introduced in Australia in the 18th century. At first, they were brought in by the first fleet in 1778 by the settlers and were first bred as food animals in Australia by the European settlers. The domestic rabbit was used as food by the settlers because it was an easily available food rich in protein. The wild rabbits were introduced by Thomas Austin for the purpose of hunting. Thomas Austin was the first person to release 24 rabbits on his farm so as to dedicate his weekend for hunting unknowingly that it will create the problem of rabbit infestation in Australia. Through Austin's release of the 24 rabbits, the species population grew enormously in Australia becoming an environmental problem. Thomas Austin is the one who is held

responsible for rabbit infestation in Australia even though the other settler later released rabbits on their farms too. The rabbit infestation first started in Victoria where Austin had released them and spread to New South Wales in 1886 (Cooke, 1997). In 1900, the rabbit infestation later spread to the Northern Territory and Western Australia making it become an environmental problem. The rapid growth of rabbits has become a threat to the Australian environment and agricultural sector and the problem needs to be dealt with. Rabbit infestation became an environmental problem in Australia because its widespread caused a lot of havoc on the Australian vegetation. The destruction of vegetation has led to the great loss of native plants by preventing the young and native plants from growing because they feed on them. Rabbits have caused a lot of damage to valuable crops in Australia. They have also caused soil erosion because they feed on all the plants leaving the soil bare and vulnerable to soil erosion. Rabbits have also grazed on all nutritional plants leading to a decrease in food and cash crop production in Australia and also they compete with native fauna for nutritious foods thus affecting plants growth.

In addition, the rabbits compete for food with native animals and domestic livestock thus leading to a decrease of native animals and livestock that is being bred in Australia since there food to feed on is not enough. The European rabbit has brought a lot of serious environmental and agricultural problems in Australia. Rabbits have had adverse effects on farm productivity and native ecosystem because due to soil erosion, no plants can do well on the Australian soil and it takes a lot of time for the soil to become fertile for the growth of food and cash crops. The rabbit infestation in Australia has also

led to financial strains to the natives because they are forced to pay higher prices for commodities like food and wool. The problem of rabbit infestation has become an environmental problem in Australia because it has seriously affected its ecosystem. Livestock population and native plants are the most affected by rabbits in Australia (King and Wheeler 1985).

The Australian government in trying to deal with the problem of rabbit infestation enacted rules and regulations to contain the rapid growth of rabbit population in Australia throughout the continent. Even though these regulations tried to work, all of them were unsuccessful because the problem still persisted. The first regulation was the Ground Game Act of 1880 which granted landowners the authority to destroy the rabbits by shooting and killing the species on their farms (Dolman, 1987) this is the main method that was used by the natives to contain the rabbits. Unfortunately, this method did not work because the rabbits continued breeding and the population still increased rapidly. They never realized as much as they killed the rabbits, new ones were being born and so that was not solving the problem. The second regulation was enacted during the World War I which is called the Com Production Act of 1917. This act was passed and the Agricultural Board gave the landowners the authority to destroy the rabbits in any way they deem necessary but at their own expense. They used all the means they could including poisoning them but still this technique was not successful to eliminate them. Another Act was the Settlers Act of 1923 where the rabbit-proof netting was introduced which was to help stop rabbits from marauding from one property to another (Cooke and Hunt 1987). Every land owner was to put a rabbit-proof fence on their farms (Pilkington, 2002).

Although it worked for the part on stopping them from moving from one property to the other because all the farms were fenced, but it did not stop them from breeding because they still multiplied on the farms. They never realized that the rabbits were still breeding in their farms.

Poisoning the rabbits was the main method used by the land owners to contain the rabbits. They used the Myxomatosis virus which was released to the rabbits. This was being inhumane. Even though most of them died but they later became resistant to it and they continued multiplying. Another way that was used to solve the rabbit infestation problem was the introduction of the European rabbit flea. These fleas were introduced so that they could attack and kill them and of course a few died for sometime and later they were able to resist the fleas. The Spanish flea was also introduced but still they became resistant to them. Moreover, the hemorrhagic disease (RHD) was released in New South Wales which later was spread throughout the country (Kovaliski, 1998). This helped for sometime as many rabbits were killed. Studies done have shown that the rabbits have become resistant to this disease (King, Wheeler and Robinson, 1984). The landowners in Australia used machinery to shoot and destroy the rabbits and also used the fluoroacetate (1080) to poison them. They also built fences to stop feral animals, foxes, dingo and cats from entering their farms but they never looked for a long term solution to stop them from multiplying.

Many of the methods used to tame the rabbit infestation problem failed because they developed resistance against them. They used short term methods instead of researching for long term solutions that could stop them from breeding. What was done was not enough because instead of reducing

the rabbit population, it rapidly increased and it remained an environmental problem in Australia. The solutions that were being used by the Australian government and landowners were short term solutions and that is why they were not successful to contain the rabbit infestation problem. In my point of view, the solution I feel should be provided is that a virus causing sterility should be introduced and all rabbits that are born should be injected with it so as to contain them. More studies should be done on how to sterilize the rabbits to stop them from multiplying and new ones being born. Long term solutions for containing rabbits should be found since the many methods used were short term solutions and that is why rabbit infestation is still an environmental problem in Australia.

The land owners should first accept that rabbit infestation is a problem that needs to be dealt with and then develop long term and sustainable measures to end this problem. The society and all individuals should work together in order to contain this pest. Lastly, in order to contain rabbit infestation in Australian farms, more than one control method should be used so as to stop the rising and spread of this pest. The government should work together with the natives in solving this problem.

Rabbit infestation control will have many advantages on the Australian ecosystem. If the government manages to contain the rabbits, there will be an increase in the survival of Australian native plants and animals. There will be an increase in crop yield in Australia if the problem of rabbit infestation is controlled. Food crops will be in plenty because their land will not be affected by marauding rabbits thus natives will spend less on food. The Australian ecosystem will improve as there will be no threat to it. The immediate effect

if the problem of rabbit infestation is not dealt with is that there will be lack of food and the prices of food stuffs will rise because the production rate will be low. If no correction is made on this problem, there will be no native plants and animals in Australia and thus native species loss. The long term effect is the decline of livestock farming and growth of food stuffs in Australia and this will affect the economy of the continent. The soil erosion problem will persist thus there will be nothing for the livestock to graze on and the land will not be fit and fertile for growing any crops. There will be too much spent yearly on containing rabbits if a long term correction is not found and this will affect the financial position of both the individuals and the government. If rabbit infestation problem will be dealt with, individuals will have nothing to worry about on their farms and they will focus on farming to improve the agricultural sector of their continent. The landowners will plant any crops they want since there will be no rabbits to destroy and feed on them. Many livestock's will be bred by the farmers because there will be no competition for food with the rabbits thus there will be enough for them to eat.

Rabbits were being used as food since time immemorial even during the World War I and are still used as food even today and so destroying all of them will have led to a loss of an easily available food rich in protein.

Eliminating the rabbit species will endanger the rabbit species yet it is still needed as food for both the natives and for export. Studies done on rabbit population have shown that the population has reduced from 200-300 millions rabbits to 100 million which is a threat to the rabbit species. Rabbit farming is a boom to the Australian economy since its meat is imported and

consumed by the natives and its elimination will affect the export business. Rabbit overpopulation is a potential cash crop that is readily available and its elimination will lead to a decline of this cash crop. Rabbits are an ideal cash crop that matures faster due to its low gestation period and it is the best protein that is easily available in Australia both for consumption and import and so its elimination will affect the economic status of the continent. In addition, rabbits are the major source of affordable protein found in Australia for human consumption and by eliminating all the rabbits, it will be denying the natives easier access to this food rich in protein.

Although rabbits are a potential cash crop in Australia, the rabbit infestation problem cannot be left just like that because the Australian ecosystem has highly been affected by this problem. The problem cannot be left a problem because they rabbits have caused a lot of harm than good in the farms of the Australia's natives. The problem needs to be solved so as to boost the agricultural sector of Australia.

If the correction of rabbit infestation is done, there will be a clean environment and an increase in food production in Australia. The agricultural sector will be boosted and this will later boost the Australian economy.

Conversely, by correcting the rabbit infestation problem, we will be trading a problem for another because it will lead to the loss of the rabbit species yet this species is still needed for human consumption since it is a great source of protein that is easily available and affordable. Correcting the rabbit infestation problem will have negative effects on the economic and export sector in Australia. Rabbit's meat is imported in Australia and eliminating them will lead to a decline in this business.

The rabbit species is still needed and domestic rabbits produce the best meat rich in protein to the natives in Australia. The main solution for this problem is to contain the multiplication rate so as not to have many rabbits that can become a threat to the society. The rabbit species has more advantages than disadvantages as long as they are not overpopulated. They are an ideal cash crop that is easily harvested in Australia compared to the other cash crops found in the Australian continent. The Australian government should develop a permanent solution to control the growth of rabbits but not by eliminating them and poisoning them since poisoning is inhuman and should be avoided. A lot of research needs to be done in order to address this problem and not to harm the rabbits.

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