Now is the time to poison emus

John L. Long
VERMIN CONTROL IN WINTER

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The best time to poison emus is during the winter, from May to August.

Once natural grasses and the crops start coming to head in August-September, the chances of a successful poisoning are not good. Emus have been found to prefer the seeding heads of natural grasses and crops in preference to grain bait at this period.

With the advent of the early heavy rains in May, the birds should be very mobile and hungry and can be easily poisoned.

Poisoning emus now has the effect of reducing crop damage by these birds later in the year when the crop is dry and prone to damage.

Free Feeding

Feeding stations for emus are established by placing heaps of wheat in paddocks where the birds are seen to congregate regularly.

Initially, small heaps of from 5 to 10 lb. of wheat are sufficient. (Oats can be used but results may not be as good). The heaps should be spaced across the area where the birds have been noticed—for example, five or six heaps may be spaced about 20 yards apart across an area in the paddock where the birds have been sighted regularly.

Once the emus find the wheat the amount in each heap should be increased to about 2 lb. per bird for the remaining two free feeds. This allows for the greedy as well as the not-so-greedy birds to feed from the heaps.

It is important to give the full three free feeds, laying grain every second day. After the first feed paraffin oil should be applied at the rate of 4 fluid ounces per 10 lb. of wheat. This ensures that all birds become accustomed to feeding at the heaps and also to the paraffin oil. This is used later to adhere the poison to the grains. Laying out the bait towards evening and without undue disturbance to the emus will help you to obtain a better kill.

Poisoning

The poison bait is prepared by mixing 1 ounce of soluble strychnine with 4 fluid ounces of paraffin oil, then pouring this mixture onto the wheat and mixing. Rubber gloves should be used while mixing and handling the poison. Remove any free feed left over and lay the poison on the same spots used for the free feeding, allowing ½ lb. of the poisoned wheat for each emu.—J. LONG (M.D.A.).

RABBITS

Rabbit poisoning over much of the agricultural areas is not a practical proposition in a normal July. This season with the wet weather and boggy paddocks in many areas it is not possible to get on to land to carry out baiting. In some dry sandy areas, poisoning is still possible and if there is several days of fine weather at the time of laying, the results will be good.

Fumigation is becoming increasingly important. Lately several farmers have received notices to fumigate bad pockets of rabbits which cannot be treated any other way. Due to the unusually wet conditions, warren ripping is restricted and more effort should be directed towards fumigation.

FOXES

Now that autumn lambing has finished, trouble from foxes should not be bad. Vixens are almost ready to give birth to their young and their movements are sluggish. In places where dens can be located they should be fumigated with a rabbit fumigant and the surroundings heavily baited.

For further details of rabbit and fox control work, you should contact your local vermin control officer through the shire council if necessary.
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