



Straying stock and other animals

Article courtesy of the Tablelands LHPA

Animals straying onto private lands, whether they are a large bull from down the road or straying dogs from a neighbour's property, can easily cause damage and fray relationships between neighbours. Your first reaction may be to reach for the gun, but think again – besides being illegal this option could end up costing you a lot of money. Also illegal would be to claim the straying animal and put your identification marks or brands on it.

The issue of straying stock can be found in most areas of the Tablelands, but it is generally more prominent around smaller holdings. What can be done about it, and who is responsible for straying stock are common questions we get asked at the LHPA. In reply the first thing we ask is have you discussed this with your neighbour/the owner of the animals. You have to live in the area and the first port of call should be to discuss the issue with the person who owns the animals. Discuss calmly what the problem is and talk about possible solutions. You may need to replace or maintain a common fence to contain livestock that are straying or get the person to restrain dogs when they are not present. If discussions do fall down and you need to know who is responsible for fencing, for instance, you can do an online search on the *Dividing Fences Act 1991*. This Act sets out who is responsible and what actions can be taken to rectify fencing related problems.

Another useful piece of information for straying domestic dogs and cats is the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. This Act is administered by the local Councils and sets out what you can do regarding straying dogs and cats.

For larger animals the *Impounding Act 1993* sets out the rights and responsibilities you as a landholder have regarding straying livestock, and provides useful information when dealing with straying animals on your land.

Remember, in most situations a simple solution can be found when you discuss the options with the animal's owner. If you cannot come to some agreement then look into what the above listed Acts say you can do and what appeal process you have. If you don't know who owns the animal microchips (cats and dogs) can be useful as are NLIS devices in sheep, cattle and goats.

We all want to enjoy the peaceful country life, so if a problem arises with straying animals consider your options for resolving the matter before it gets out of hand and causes conflict.