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## **BLORE FAMILY USES LOCAL KNOWLEDGE FOR INNOVATIVE GOAT TRAP DESIGN**

Using the natural features of his property and his knowledge of feral goat behaviour, Mr John Blore of Belmont Station near Broken Hill designed and built a large-scale fencing project that will allow him to reduce goat numbers and protect native pasture.

Mr Blore was one of 199 Western Catchment land managers who improved the condition of his property through the Western Catchment Management Authority's \$4.3 million 2007 Incentive Program.

People interested in funding through this year's program should apply before April 30 by ringing 1800 032 101 or visiting [www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au)

Phil Blore purchased Belmont Station in 1981 and he and John operate it along with John's wife, Airlie, and their two daughters Alice and Gracie.

"Approximately half of the property consists of the Mundi Mundi Plains, while the remainder is rugged terrain," John said.

"Two natural features made goat control extremely hard. There's a six kilometre waterfrontage to the Umberumeka Reservoir where it's difficult to trap the goats and once they head for the rough terrain of Mt Mundi Mundi and Mt Umberumeka it's virtually impossible.

"At any one time there'd be about a thousand goats on the place so that even when you planned to have six to eight months feed for sheep that were lambing, the goats would come through and it would all be gone in a few weeks.

"Having such large numbers of goats on the place was a cause of constant frustration.

"We've had eight years of drought and of course we've reduced our stock numbers accordingly, but with the heavy numbers of goats on that delicate hill country we needed to take control of their numbers.

John's solution was to design a series of long fences with wings that took advantage of the natural features of the property such as sheer cliff faces, natural soaks and blind-spots over ridges, as well as knowledge of the goat's behaviour to funnel them into traps.

"We put in about eight kilometres of fencing and four traps. I've used wings and flood gates to maximise its effectiveness so we're now able to trap goats off 11,000 hectares or about a quarter of the property.

"It took four months to complete the fencing and the day after we finished we tried it out.

"With three of us on motorbikes we rounded up six hundred goats in an hour and a half.



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"They headed for the hills and rounded a blind spot where they thought they were safe, but that funnelled them into a race and then into a holding yard and with the long wings we've built there wasn't any escape.

"I knew then that all the planning and hard work was going to pay off," John said.

John's designs also extended to the traps themselves. Rather than the traditional steel ramps, John has built rock ramps.

"While most goats will walk up a traditional steel ramp, some of them balk at it, so it seemed like a good idea to use the rocks that they're used to climbing on and it's working well," he said.

Since John finished the fencing in mid-February he's caught 1,450 goats.

"It was extremely difficult work. The terrain is so rugged that six kilometres according to GPS points was actually eight kilometres when you took into account the vertical rises. I estimated that it would take 800 hours, but in some places it took a week to do one kilometre so it ended up being more like 2,000 hours – but it was worth the effort.

"Now we can start controlling the stock that's on the land and to be honest, when you've got domestic stock on that area you're spending time there so you're able to control the weeds and other things like that.

"Once the ferals make the country unviable it starts to become neglected.

"We haven't had any decent rain since the fencing was complete so it's hard to see the benefits, but when it does we'll be in a better position to let the country revive," he said.

The area has a long history of regeneration work. Records show that when Belmont was part of the Mundi Mundi Pastoral Company in the early 1900s, large quantities of mulga were cut for fencing, fuel and other needs resulting in the declaration of a Mulga Protection Zone, making it illegal to cut green mulga.

The Blore family continue in the footsteps of those early pioneers who cared for their country.

"I'm very happy with the project. I guess everyone's got ideas of how to make their place better but not necessarily the means to bring it to fruition.

"The Western CMA funding meant that even though things have been tight financially, we've still been able to make improvements on our place," Mr Blore said.

Applications for the Western CMA's 2008 Incentive Program will be accepted until April 30. For more information contact your local Western CMA office, ring freecall 1800 032 101 or visit [www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au)



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The Incentive Programs are provided through the NSW and Australian Governments and is part of a combined \$23 million commitment to the Western Catchment over a four year period.

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Captions:

John Blore and daughter Alice with trapped goats.

John Blore with daughters Alice and Gracie.

John and Alice Blore on the rock ramps he designed and built himself.

View of Umberumeka Reservoir from Belmont Station.

