



## Setting the scene

Hundreds of exotic prickly acacia plants (a noxious weed introduced from Southern Africa) have established on a farm located in northern South Australia. As a result, the farmer has a number of problems including:

- a reduction in suitable grazing for his sheep
- damage to the sheep's fleece
- damage to new born lambs
- inability to use working sheep dogs due to many thorns on the ground
- the restricted use of horses and motor cycles due to dense thorny thickets
- the prevention of sheep accessing water points

Over the years chemical sprays have reduced the spread of the prickly acacia but recently many plants are showing signs of resistance to the chemicals and are now starting to spread to adjoining properties. Bulldozing and burning only encourages the prickly acacia to spread its seeds.

The only animal known to kill prickly acacia is the giraffe. In Africa the prickly acacia is a favourite meal for the giraffe who will often remove all of the leaves which then kills the plant.

The farmer has applied for a permit to import 20 adult giraffes and five young to assist in the removal of prickly acacia.

## What to do

Answer this question:

**Do you think giraffes are capable of becoming a serious pest animal in Australia?**

YES

NO

## What to do next

**Your job is to find out whether a giraffe can become a serious pest if it escapes from the farmer's property and establishes a wild population.**

Use the giraffe fact sheet to complete the **PEST ASSESSMENT GUIDE** and create a score for each of the following sections:

- Risk to public safety
- Risk of establishing a wild population
- Risk of becoming a pest

Use the **PEST ANSWER SHEET** to find out if giraffes are capable of becoming a serious pest animal in Australia.

### FERAL FACT

**Unfortunately, there is still a risk of new animals such as fish, birds or reptiles entering Australia and becoming harmful pests. These could be animals already kept as pets such as ferrets or animals kept in zoos or they could even be animals that are brought to Australia in the future. If these animals escaped or were released they could start to breed and spread to new locations. Once widespread in Australia removing these animals would be impossible.**