

Protect your livestock.
Protect your livelihood.



Lowering the Risk of Attacks on Livestock by Common Predators

This fact sheet provides livestock producers with general information about lowering the risk of attacks from common predators.

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Predator Status

Wild Animals: Predators such as coyotes, black bears, foxes and wolves are managed species under *The Wildlife Act*. They can be hunted or trapped with a valid hunting or trapping licence and during specific seasons. Some predators can be killed without a licence to protect property, which includes livestock. See the Lethal Control – Protection of Property section on page 3 for details.

Cougars are a protected species and cannot be killed in defence of property.

Domestic and Feral Dogs: Domestic and feral dogs are not considered wildlife under *The Wildlife Act*. As a livestock owner, you will not receive compensation for losses caused by domestic or feral dog attacks. Wild predators are sometimes blamed for livestock damage that was actually caused by domestic and feral dogs.

It is important for producers to recognize what predators are causing the damage. Different species attack different parts of their prey's bodies. Domestic and feral dogs will bite and slash numerous parts of their prey over much of the body, rather than attack one specific part. While domestic dogs rarely eat any livestock they have killed, feral dogs will sometimes do so. Identifying tracks and scat may tell producers whether livestock has been attacked by dogs or by other predators. If it's clear that dogs have attacked your livestock consider the following options:

- ask your neighbours to control their pets
- contact your local municipal office to check on any bylaws covering off-leash pets
- ask for an animal control officer to handle the situation

Controlling Predators

There are many ways for producers to reduce predator attacks on their livestock. A combination of approaches is usually the most effective.

Non-Lethal Control

Animal Husbandry: Good herd or flock management is one of the most effective methods of reducing the potential for attacks from common predators. Daily monitoring of your livestock is critical. It allows you to spot problems immediately and deal with them before they become critical. Other preventive management includes:

- maintaining calving and lambing facilities near buildings where there is human activity
- using pens to house livestock at night and locating them away from protective cover like shrubs, trees or tall grasses (ex: 50 metres for bears; 400 metres for cougars)
- altering the timing of calving and lambing seasons to reduce exposure of young animals to predators

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- avoiding problem areas (ex: heavy brush, near watercourses, hilly terrain) where leaving livestock makes them more vulnerable to predators
- properly disposing carcasses to reduce the attraction for predators

Electric Fences: Electric fences are the most successful form of preventing predator attacks. A California study showed that electric fences were more effective in keeping coyotes away from sheep than getting rid of the coyotes in the area. Many producers resist electric fences because of the cost. However, recent improvements have cut the cost – some even lower than regular fencing. There are many designs available. For more information on electric fences, go to Manitoba Agriculture website at www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/livestock/production/beef/everything-you-need-to-know-about-electric-fencing.html or contact a fencing supplier.

Guard Animals: Guard animals, including dogs, donkeys and llamas, can provide effective prevention of predator attacks and they provide protection 24/7. Using these animals along with other control methods, especially electric fencing, is very successful at preventing predator attacks.

Guard dogs are particularly recommended and in multiples of two (for their own protection). They should be chosen based on where you keep your livestock and what predators are common to the area. These dogs must be properly trained to protect livestock and producers need to help train dogs to bond with the livestock and not with people.



Donkeys are also useful as protection, but are not as effective as dogs. The advantage of them is that they are known to be inherently aggressive toward dogs and coyotes, but they don't have any protective instincts toward livestock. However, if you do use donkeys, the jenny or gelded jacks are best.

Some of the costs for buying and maintaining guard animals are tax deductible and producers have the option of breeding them if they choose.

Scaring Devices and Repellents: These methods of controlling predators are short term solutions because predators quickly adapt to them. However, they are useful as a stop-gap until more permanent methods can be adopted. Noise makers (ex: scare cannons, radios and motion-detecting noise devices) have some limited success when used in combination with visual deterrents (ex: lights, scarecrows, and flags hung at regular intervals). However, you must move them around fairly often so predators don't get used to them.

Chemical repellents can also be effective, but have shown limited success at preventing predator attacks. Cost is a major concern, since many are expensive to buy and they must be applied frequently to be effective.

Removing Attractants: Predators may be attracted to a livestock site for many reasons (ex: carcasses of dead animals, presence of after-birth). Food compost, pet food and ripe fruit fallen from trees in yards also attract predators. Junk piles can provide protective cover for prey animals that predators like to consume. Producers





are advised to remove these types of attractants as soon as possible so as not to create a reason for the predator to investigate and become accustomed to frequenting the area.

Lethal Control

Lethal methods of removing predators can include the use of firearms and trapping devices. In Manitoba, you must have a valid licence to hunt/trap predators and only during official trapping or hunting seasons. Cougars are an exception because they cannot be legally killed in Manitoba. Landowners may also use lethal methods (except poison) to get rid of predators if they are doing it to protect their property and may do so any time of year.

Protection of Property: Subsection 46(1) of *The Wildlife Act* states that a person may kill or take any wildlife, other than a moose, caribou, cougar, deer, antelope, elk or game bird, on their own land if they are doing it to defend or preserve their own property. This only entitles owners to shoot or trap problem wildlife (except those mentioned above) without a permit; without first reporting it to a Conservation Officer; and without following the normal season restrictions that apply to hunting and trapping. This provision is restricted to the land owned by the individual and does not include leased Crown land or rented private land. A person who kills or takes any species of wild animal to defend or preserve property, must – under subsection 46(1) of *The Wildlife Act* – report the incident to a Conservation Officer within 10 days.

Landowners must apply for a Wild Animal Kill Permit from Manitoba Sustainable Development if they want to:

- a) designate someone else to remove problem wildlife on their property
- b) remove problem wildlife to protect their property on Crown land or rented private land

Hunting: Coyotes and wolves can be hunted by licensed hunters using calls (including electronic calls) to lure them. The use of firearms must comply with federal legislation and local municipal bylaws. Landowners can take predators without a licence under the Protection of Property provisions (previous section). Also, there are restrictions in place regarding the use of dead livestock for bait in order to reduce the spread of disease. For more information on hunting coyotes and wolves, please refer to the provincial hunting guide at www.manitoba.ca/sd/wildlife/hunting.

Trapping: Coyotes, wolves and foxes can be trapped during regular seasons by licensed trappers. The most common devices used are leg-hold traps and power snares. If traps are being set, you should let your neighbours know where and when so they can keep their pets away from the areas. Restrictions are also in place regarding the use of dead livestock for bait in order to reduce the spread of disease. For more details on trapping, see the provincial trapping guide at: www.manitoba.ca/sd/wildlife/trapping

Landowners familiar with trapping techniques can remove predators without a valid trapping licence through the Protection of Property provisions (see page 3). Landowners who do not want to hunt or trap predators may find it useful to work with a hunter/trapper in their area. The Manitoba Trappers Association (MTA) maybe able to put you in contact with a local trapper. Contact the MTA at 204-739-2624. You should connect with the hunter/trapper as soon as possible and certainly before the trapping season begins, so they can familiarize themselves with your area and livestock operations.

Do Not Use Poison

Under *The Wildlife Act*, no person shall possess poison or a poison device for the purpose of hunting, trapping, taking or killing a wild animal. The use of poison is illegal because it may inadvertently kill animals that are not meant to be killed.

Compensation

Compensation for livestock injured or killed by bears, coyotes, cougars, foxes and wolves is available from the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC). Producers are advised to contact the nearest MASC office for details; or go to the MASC website at: www.masc.mb.ca/masc.nsf/program_wildlife_damage_compensation.html

Problem Predator Management Program

Manitoba livestock producers lose animals annually to predators. The number of losses varies from year to year. To help producers deal with predator damage, Manitoba Sustainable Development is collaborating with the Manitoba Trappers Association (MTA) to provide services to landowners. The goal is to remove problem predators that have attacked livestock or

threatened the safety of people, their pets or livestock. The program is not for general predator population reduction. It addresses only those predators that have caused damage to property or threatened the safety of people.

If a predator has attacked your livestock, contact your local MASC office to see if you are eligible for compensation. When assigned a claim number, you may then contact the MTA (204-739-2624) to have a trapper assigned to remove the predators causing damage.

Remember that using preventive measures can help reduce the potential for predator problems and these include effective herd and flock management.

For More Information

Information about lowering the risk of attacks from common predators to livestock is available at: [change to: www.manitoba.ca/sd/wildlife/problem_wildlife/predator_management.html](http://change.to:www.manitoba.ca/sd/wildlife/problem_wildlife/predator_management.html) and www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/livestock/production/sheep/sheep-predator-control-and-guard-animals.html

