

S.F. 1453: Wolf-livestock conflict prevention pilot program grants appropriation

Nonlethal Methods to Prevent Conflicts Between Livestock and Wolves

While livestock losses from wolf predation are relatively low in Minnesota, reducing wolf-livestock conflicts is critical to helping Minnesota's farmers, wolves, and communities co-exist and thrive.

Due to federal Endangered Species Act protections, it is currently illegal for farmers to harm or kill a wolf in Minnesota and across the Great Lakes region. Instead, wolves are typically killed by government agents where livestock predation has been confirmed. So far this year, the USDA has killed 176 wolves in response to livestock predation complaints. In 2015 there were 84 calves/cows verified as killed by wolves across the state (over the last two decades this figure has ranged between 52-116, averaging 80 each year). Existing state and federal funds are in place to compensate farmers for such losses, provided the incident is reported and verified by the state.

In an effort to reduce both the number of predator conflicts with livestock and the number wolves killed in response, Howling For Wolves promotes nonlethal methods as an important tool to assist farmers/ranchers in preventing wolf-livestock conflicts. **There are several effective nonlethal methods that help reduce predator conflicts with livestock listed below.** Smart animal husbandry practices combined with strategic nonlethal predator deterrents have been shown to considerably reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.



Alarm or Scare Devices

Combinations of alarm systems with flashing and/or moving lights and/or sounds are used for the purpose of scaring wolves from areas of livestock activity. Several products already on the market are affordable, easy to use, and have been proven effective.



Fencing/Fladry

Permanent or portable barriers and fences, sometimes electrified and enhanced with fladry, are effective ways to deter wolves. Fladry is typically a line of rope mounted along a fence line with hanging strips of red nylon flags. The flags frighten predators, making them unwilling to cross the line. Although its effect may decrease over time, this method is particularly helpful during high-risk times of conflict.



Livestock Protection Animals

Livestock producers have long relied on dogs and other guard animals to protect livestock from predators. In some instances, the mere presence of protection animals keeps wolves away from livestock. In other cases, guard dogs play a more active role by alerting farmers to wolves and other predators in the area.



Reduce Attractants

Removing diseased, dying, or dead animals or carcasses from areas where they can attract wolves. Like other canines, wolves have a very good sense of smell and can detect prey from miles away.



Human Presence

Regular human activity in areas where wolves are known to exist, especially during calving/lambing periods, effectively deters wolves. The underlying concept is that wolves tend to avoid humans.

