



Dealing with Wildlife Issues

Predators have caused considerable damage to producer property and death to livestock. Presently, the provincial **Wildlife Predator Compensation Program** does not cover coyote predation deaths. However cattle, bison, sheep, goats and swine deaths from wolves, black bear, grizzly bear, cougar and eagles are compensated. The program does not compensate for other livestock types.

Predator Kills. If a producer believes a predator has killed his livestock the nearest Fish and Wildlife office should be called as soon as possible. A wildlife officer needs to confirm and document any evidence. If the evidence is not there compensation is usually not available.

The Evidence. The Wildlife officer will look for evidence to substantiate the claim. After making the call to the office he may want to have the carcass covered to prevent further destruction from scavenging. Animal tracks in the immediate area are important to preserve. Tracks on the ground and in the snow further away from the kill may also be important to the case. Evidence from neighbour predation problems is also used.

An officer will examine the livestock and immediate area for predation evidence. Usually the type of claw marks or tracks around the animal will be used. The officer needs to be satisfied of the cause of death for his report. These are filed at the office. A Regional Problem Wildlife Specialist audits claims. Any offside investigations are flagged; field officer reassessment may be requested.

About 65 percent of producers have had coyote impacts. These are not compensated. Coyotes may hunt in packs similar to wolves or as individuals. They may attack from the rear or suffocate their prey by crushing the windpipe. Lacerations or puncture wounds are smaller than those left by wolves or cougars. Most coyotes don't kill larger cattle but prey on smaller animals including young calves. Many coyotes will not kill calves but clean up dead calves.

Wolf kill injuries are usually to the tail, hindquarters and flank and under and behind the front legs. Blood trails may lead up to the carcass; wolf tracks in the area are also considered. A cougar will leave injuries on the neck, throat and skull. Once dead the cougar may pull the carcass some distance away before eating on it.

Keeping neighbours informed. Predation problems are not usually one-offs; they can be occurring in the local area. Producers should inform close neighbours that predation is happening to help control any problems. This helps the neighbours with potential predator problems and can assist in providing wildlife death evidence for others in the area.

Compensation Process. If the death is verified by predator type covered by the program Fish and Wildlife send the claim to the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) office. ACA processes the claims and pays as filed. Turn around time for payment may take up to six weeks or less after a claim is filed.

Additional information can be found on-line at Environment and Parks website by goggling "Alberta Wildlife Predator Compensation Program".

- *Livestock deaths from predators should be reported to the nearest wildlife office.*
- *A wildlife officer will determine the cause of death and file a claim report.*
- *If approved the claim will be compensated at 100% CANFAX rates.*
- *If predator death is suspect the claim will be compensated at 50% CANFAX rates.*
- *Compensation is not paid for coyote predation.*
- *For verified claims the Fish and Wildlife office will forward these to the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) office for payment. ACA pays the amount indicated on the claim.*
- *Turn around time for payment may take up to six weeks or less after a claim is filed.*