

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
WILDLIFE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES
MONDAY MARCH 2, 2020, 8:30 am

Present: Shane Hansen
Lori Kinnee
Gary These
Jodi Flraig
Mike Nadeau
Jeff Bectell

- Zone 2
- Zone 9
- @ Large
- @ Large
- Director
- WBRA

Staff: Tom Lynch-Staunton - *GR & Policy Manager*

1. Discussion Items

(a) Discussions with Government Update

Lynch-Staunton, Bectell, and Nadeau attended a meeting with Minister Nixon on Feb 19th and updated the Wildlife Committee on what was discussed. In addition to the Minister, ADM Stephanie Clarke (Resource Stewardship), MLA Nate Horner, and Special Advisor to the Minister, Dean Miller were in attendance from the government

We discussed the project in detail with the Minister who is supportive including the need for increased compensation but emphasized that there may not be enough money to pay for every aspect of the pilot project. ABP/WBRA gave several options including scenarios to split compensation funding with ACA to reduce overall costs to AB Environment and Parks. Minister would also like to do the project in the west Central region in addition to NW and SW regions.

Nadeau thought it would be a challenge to get everything approved because of funding constraints but supportive of getting letters of support from ENGOs to give more negotiating power.

Bectell and Lynch-Staunton are following up with ADM Stephanie Clarke to further explore funding options of the pilot project and try to keep momentum

(b) Wildlife Regulations Review

In parallel with the Predator Pilot project, Lynch-Staunton drafted recommendations to changes to the Wildlife Regulations since they are up for renewal in June 2020 and shared with the Wildlife Committee for review.

In the Wildlife Act, Lynch-Staunton suggested a change to allow for the Minister to appoint “wildlife depredation inspectors/verifiers” which the committee agreed to. Nadeau suggested also allowing for Fish and Wildlife Officers the ability to appoint these verifiers, not just the Minister. Bectell raised a flag that “wildlife guardians” may have a negative connotation to unbiased verifications.

Definition of livestock- committee supported adding horses, stock dogs, and guard animals to definition but recognized that animals that contribute to the farm business should only be eligible for compensation (as opposed to pets and hobby

animals). Supported the idea of maximum payments for some specific species.

Discussed shot livestock compensation only eligible during hunting season to lower moral hazard. These did have an animal shot 3 days before hunting season and was denied compensation. Need to have an allowance in regs for exceptions and investigations.

Committee supported adding ravens and coyotes to eligible predators, but recognized need to keep costs in check. Likely no need for a multiplier, only full value of livestock or to cover losses from injuries due to ravens and coyotes. These mentioned ravens continue to be a huge problem in the north.

Bectell mentioned that government has tended to more willingly support compensation on predators that we don’t have the ability to control, therefore may be less willing to include ravens and coyotes as eligible predators.

Committee also discussed the importance of producer due diligence and mitigation but agreed it shouldn’t be in regulations since some government staff will tend to look for ways to deny a claim.

Committee discussed a change in Sec 15(4) to allow for losses over and above the value of the killed livestock, but recognized this could open the door to claiming any loss that happens. The need for this change though would allow for applying a multiplier. Lynch-Staunton can work with AEP on wording.

Committee thought 15(6) wording needed to be clarified since it implies that one could only claim the lowest \$ of medical costs or death of the animal.

Section 16(3) committee agreed that this should be removed to allow for claiming both the medical costs and the value of the animal if it dies.

Question as to whether to keep the recommendation for ensuring there is adequate funding for predator compensation if ACA lobbies for changes to regulation so they don’t have to pay it. Committee agreed we should keep this in.

(c) Next Steps with Project

Lynch-Staunton will follow up with ADM Stephanie Clarke and staff to keep momentum going and finalize options for funding. ABP will see if the other beef industry organizations what to submit our Wildlife Reg changes in a joint letter. Bectell will continue to try to get Letters of Support for project

2. Adjournment

Call ended at 10am.