

January 22, 2025

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
500 West Washington St.
Boise, ID. 83702

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in response to the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's comment left on the Federal Register for Docket No. APHIS-2024-0053, "A Survey of Livestock Producer Perceptions of Predators and Predator Damage Management Methods." We thank you kindly for your thoughtful comment. Please see below for our response:

The survey should not be limited to producers currently receiving predator damage management services.

- The scope of our study is specific to evaluating the USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (WS) Nonlethal Initiative programs, which narrows our sample to only those livestock producers who received nonlethal predator damage management assistance from WS with congressionally appropriated funding.

The proposed emphasis on nonlethal control tells only part of the story. It is equally important to assess the effectiveness of lethal control methods in reducing livestock losses... Comparing the effectiveness of nonlethal and lethal strategies will provide actionable insights for improving predator management.

- We agree it is important to assess lethal control. The survey is written so that respondents can evaluate lethal and nonlethal predator damage management methods. This information will help the WS meet respondents' needs related to predator damage management and improve predator damage management method implementations.

In addition to broadening the survey's focus, it would be beneficial to analyze complementary efforts at the state level.

- While analyzing efforts at the state level could provide beneficial insight into on-the-ground management programs aimed at mitigating livestock-predator interactions, such an analysis is beyond the scope of the present study. This study represents an evaluation of a congressionally funded management initiative carried out by WS.

We urge APHIS to design a survey that accommodates producers' varied experiences and provides opportunities for detailed feedback... Open-ended questions and narrative responses are essential for capturing the nuanced, fact-specific nature of these experiences.

- Several questions within our questionnaire allow for open-ended responses, including an opportunity at the end of the survey for respondents to provide any remaining comments. Additionally, for multiple-choice questions, we provided as many opportunities as possible for respondents to be able to select "other" and subsequently write in their desired response.

Additionally, recognizing that many livestock producers live in remote areas with limited access to the internet or electronic submission options, the survey must allow alternative response methods and a sufficiently long response period to ensure participation from as many producers as possible.

- For respondents who have limited access to the internet or electronic submission options, a mailing survey packet will be sent and include a printed version of the multi-item questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. Respondents will have a period of 6 weeks to respond to the questionnaire.

Thank you again for the thoughtful feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan Cross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Megan" and last name "Cross" clearly distinguishable.

Megan M. Cross, PhD

Social Scientist

USDA / APHIS / Wildlife Services

National Wildlife Research Center

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