



Long-Term Thinking
for Today's Issues

Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

7660 Mill Rd., RR4 Guelph Ontario N1H 6J1

Voice (519) 837-1620 Fax (519) 824-1835

E-mail: cffomail@christianfarmers.org

Web site: www.christianfarmers.org

Predation Management and Crop Harvesting by Wildlife

A CFFO Position Statement

Preamble

Predation and crop loss due to wildlife activities on the farm is a going concern for many farmers. Under the Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act (LPHBPA), municipalities administer an OMAFRA-funded compensation program for predation losses. Crop losses due to wildlife consumption are a growing problem for many farmers.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) wishes to outline the concerns of its members regarding livestock and crop losses due to wildlife, and offer policy options to be taken into consideration by provincial policy makers.¹

Principles

There are a series of common difficulties that agricultural producers face with regards to predation and crop losses due to wildlife.

- 1.) Wildlife is on the rise throughout the countryside, which may prey on producer's livestock or destroy crops;²
- 2.) The cost of predation and crop harvesting by wildlife³ increases as the numbers of wildlife increase;
- 3.) Many members of the public value a healthy landscape that supports abundant wildlife even though this wildlife consumes or destroys farm production;
- 4.) Deliberate government policies, particularly those of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), have played a significant role in the increase of wildlife throughout the countryside;
- 5.) The costs of wildlife predation and crop harvesting are distributed very unevenly among farmers, with some facing significant losses;
- 6.) Wildlife management by farmers results in direct costs in addition to the loss of crops and livestock;
- 7.) The Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan delivers inadequate support for beneficial management practices (BMPs) for preventing wildlife damage;

¹ This document supersedes the CFFO's previous statements regarding predation management.

² The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association paper *Probing Problem Wildlife* states that over \$41 million in damages are done each year on Ontario, and that farmers spend \$7.5 million annually on abatement measures.

³ Includes roaming dogs.

The CFFO recommends the following policy options for dealing with livestock and crop losses due to wildlife.

- 1.) That the expansion of production insurance (APF pillar) to include compensation at market value rates for the loss of crops and livestock to wildlife and the destruction of farm infrastructure by wildlife.⁴
- 2.) Agricultural producers have a responsibility to implement reasonable and scientifically based measures to protect livestock and crops.
- 3.) As such, beneficial management practices (BMPs) for preventing wildlife damage (permanent and temporary protective fencing for livestock, guard animals, decoy crops, scaring devices) be supported by a 90% cost share program (60-40 federal/provincial participation).
- 4.) Hunting Fees collected by the MNR could serve as a source of funding for predation and crop loss management.
- 5.) The MNR develop an inventory of skilled people available to control serious predator or crop-damaging wildlife;

Particulars

Predation Compensation

There are several aspects of the Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act (LPHBPA) and its implementation that no longer provide adequate support for farmers.

1. The LPHBPA only compensates for specific predators (wolves, coyotes, and bears) while there continues to be an increase in predation by other wildlife.
2. The inequality in the training level of inspectors of different regions has created inconsistencies in assessment and compensation.
3. The LPHBPA is administered inconsistently in different municipalities, including charging inequitable evaluation fees, despite being a provincially legislated program.
4. Farm enterprises that target niche and value-added markets often lose much more than average values assigned to predation and crop harvesting by wildlife;

The CFFO recommends the following actions be taken with regards to predation compensation.

1. The CFFO endorses the modernization of the predation compensation program such that the program reimburses farmers based on the appropriate fair market value⁵ of the livestock destroyed by wildlife; Compensation should reflect on-going, non-lethal production damage that results from stressed or terrorised animals, based on the past records of the individual operation.
2. Reimbursement should be based on an individual farm's history and records, which will allow for adequate compensation for niche and specialty crops.
3. The CFFO endorses the administration of the predation compensation program through OMAFRA.
4. The MNR should control nuisance wildlife and be responsible for training and employing personnel.
5. The provincial government should ban the use of evaluation fees and insist the act be administered consistently across the province.

⁴ This should be set up as a specific peril rider, similar to the riders used for hail on the prairies.

⁵ The cull market, the lamb market, the breeding stock market, specialty and niche markets.

6. The Right to Farm Act should be amended such that livestock owners have the protected right to have guardian animals roaming free on their property.

Crop Losses due to Wildlife

The CFFO has some specific concerns regarding crop losses due to wildlife

- 1.) MNR vigorously publicize its policies regarding deer removal and protection of property.

The CFFO recommends the following

- 2.) The loss of crops to wildlife be recognized as an environmental good and service as future safety net programs include payments for environmental goods and services.

Adopted by Provincial Council
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
June 27, 2007