



Defenders of Wildlife

Agricultural Stewardship in America



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Wildlife and Ranching

Benefits of Predator Deterrence

A proactive approach to predators has many benefits:

- Reduces conflict between ranchers and predators.
- Keeps predators and livestock from being killed.
- Increases human acceptance of predators.
- Decreases the costs of predator deterrence for farmers and ranchers.

Using EQIP Proactively

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is one of the many voluntary programs offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP funding is used to improve soil, water, air and wildlife conditions on farm and ranch lands. EQIP offers up to 75 percent financial assistance and one-to-10 year contracts.

In Montana, a new, innovative effort uses EQIP to fund practices that will protect both grizzlies and wolves, while also helping farmers and ranchers. Practices include hiring additional herders, putting up fencing and removing livestock carcasses. Other states are considering similar approaches.

Protecting Grizzlies, Wolves And Ranchers Through The Farm Bill

Over the past few centuries, settlement and expansion into wild areas have contributed to the decline of many species in North America, including the wolf and grizzly bear. These predators were killed because they were seen as a threat to livestock and bee apiaries. Today we are finding ways to live cooperatively with predators, rather than killing them.

Killing predators that are listed under the Endangered Species Act is usually illegal. Therefore, landowners need options to help them manage occasional predation. Through provisions in the conservation title of the Farm Bill, conflict can be prevented before it occurs. Steadily, wolves and grizzlies are making a comeback and landowners are discovering new and inventive ways to live with wildlife.

FARM BILL SOLUTIONS: Protecting Grizzlies, Wolves and Ranchers

The Gray Wolf

Though its populations in Canada and Alaska remained large, the gray wolf was near extinction in the lower 48 states prior to its listing as endangered in 1967. Loss of habitat, humans hunting its prey and predator control measures all led to the decrease in population. Today, gray wolves can be found in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Because wolves occasionally prey on livestock, their expansion into new areas has caused some conflict with ranchers.

EQUIP Safeguards Livestock and Wolves

Proactive solutions funded by a private program and by EQIP of the Farm Bill have reduced conflict between ranchers and wolves.

In the spring of 2005, the NRCS in Montana committed over \$250,000 to help protect livestock and reduce conflict. The following practices are covered by the funding:

Herders – Human herders are hired to deter predator attacks on livestock.

Carcass Removal – Payments are made to cover the cost of removing livestock carcasses to prevent predators from developing a taste for livestock.



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Fencing – Fences are put up around calving and lambing areas.

Grizzlies

Grizzly bears were originally widespread west of the Mississippi River, but their decline in population has left only a few pockets in Montana, Washington, Idaho and Wyoming. Conflicts with humans usually result from bears' intruding on bee apiaries, attacking livestock or rummaging through trash.

Prior to the listing of grizzlies as a threatened species, ranchers were free to kill them. Now that they are protected, the grizzly population is growing. Through the conservation programs of the Farm Bill, ranchers are learning how to live with grizzlies.

EQUIP Protects Livestock, Bees and Grizzlies

In September 2005, a \$75,000 EQIP grant was awarded in Montana to the Blackfoot Challenge, a landowner-based group that manages the Blackfoot River watershed. This grant will cover the cost of practices that will help grizzlies and ranchers live together. Money from the grant will provide fencing for bee apiaries and calving and lambing areas, human herders and the removal of livestock carcasses. Conflict will be reduced through these proactive measures.

Future Opportunities: The Mexican Wolf

The Mexican wolf population was near extinction when it was listed as an endangered species. In the past, its habitat included Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. A recovery and breeding program has brought back the Mexican wolf in Arizona and New Mexico.

Like the gray wolf, the Mexican wolf sometimes attacks livestock, resulting in conflicts with ranchers. New Mexico and Arizona do not yet provide EQIP funding for conflict deterrence, but this program could provide it in the future.

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