A Guide for Livestock Producers

**DID A PREDATOR KILL OR INJURE MY LIVESTOCK?**

How do you know a predator killed an animal? You should examine the evidence closely and make an educated judgement - this can be a difficult task. If you are unsure, ask the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for help. The more knowledge and experience you have, the more likely you will correctly determine cause of death.

**EXAMINE THE SURROUNDINGS**

It is extremely important to examine the kill site for evidence. Search the ground for tracks, feces, and hair. Write down any clues and take pictures of the site if possible.

**PRESERVE THE EVIDENCE**

- Secure the area from the entry of livestock. Curious animals or upset ewes and cows can destroy evidence quickly.
- Look for tracks or scat (droppings). Cover with a bucket or empty paint can.
- Cover livestock carcass or remains with a tarp and weight securely to keep other predators from destroying teeth marks or other evidence.
- Photograph or videotape the evidence. It is helpful to put some common object (such as a pencil or ruler) next to the evidence to document size.
- Do not disturb evidence until a DNR representative can investigate the site.

Inside this pamphlet, you will find information to help determine cause of your livestock’s death and the steps to report a livestock kill.

**STEPS TO REPORT A LIVESTOCK KILL**

**STEP 1:** Carefully examine the kill site and carcass. Be cautious not to trample over animal tracks or disturb the site. A DNR representative may be able to read subtle clues that you may not recognize. If the examination suggests a wild animal killed your livestock, preserve the site by removing other livestock that may destroy the evidence.

**STEP 2:** If you suspect a wild animal killed your livestock, report the kill as soon as possible by calling the RAP hotline, 800-292-7800. Evidence of a suspected predator kill can disappear quickly due to rain or wind. For future reference, make a note of who on the RAP hotline took your report and the day and time of your report.

**STEP 3:** After receiving a report from the RAP hotline, a DNR representative will investigate the kill site and surrounding area and fill out a Report of Livestock Depredation form. If depredation by a wolf or coyote is verified, the report is sent to the Michigan Department of Agriculture for payment.

**CAUTION:** Wolves are protected under state and federal law. It is illegal to harm or kill a wolf, except in defense of human life. Private citizens are not allowed to kill a wolf during or after an attack on livestock or pets.

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- **Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**
  - Baraga 906-352-6651
  - Cadillac 231-775-9727
  - Newberry 906-293-5131
  - Gaylord 989-734-3541
  - Marquette 906-228-6561
  - Crystal Falls 906-875-6622
  - www.michigan.gov/dnr

- **Michigan DNR Wolf Coordinator**
  - 906-228-6561

- **USDA APHIS Wildlife Services**
  - Toll-free number: 866-4-USDAWS
  - www.aphis.usda.gov/wa/statereports/michigan.html

- **Michigan State University Extension**
  - 906-228-4340 (Regional Office)
  - 906-439-5880 (MSU - UP Extension)
  - www.msue.msu.edu

- **Michigan Department of Agriculture**
  - Toll-free number: 888-684-1139 (Escanaba)
  - Toll-free number: 800-992-3939 (Lansing)
  - www.michigan.gov/mda

- **International Wolf Center**
  - www.wolf.org

- **PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING PREDATION ON LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE ADAPTED FROM D. WADe & J. BOWNS**
  - http://teenat.tamu.edu/ranchret/predator/pred.htm

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*Adapted from Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture*
**How Did My Livestock Die?**

**Animal Died of Natural Causes**

- Starvation/exposure
- Internal parasites
- Bacterial & viral diseases
- Pregnancy disease
- Stillbirth
- Boat
- Lightning
- Suffocation
- Poisonous plants & moldy feeds
- Ingestion of nails, wire or other metal objects
- Poisons/chemicals, lead-based paints, or discarded batteries

**Animal is Found Dead**

**Bear**
- Typically leave their distinctive paw marks and feces. Bears tend to go for muscle rather than organs, but may eat the udder.
- Please report kill to the Michigan DNR 800-292-7800

**Wolf**
- Tend to bite flanks, hindquarters and upper shoulders of large livestock. Signs of feeding on organs and hindquarters. Carcass almost totally consumed or torn apart. Large bones are often chewed and broken.
- Please report kill to the Michigan DNR 800-292-7800

**Coyote**
- Tend to bite the throat, clamping down on the windpipe or severing the jugular vein. Coyotes often chew on ears, nose and rib cartilage
- Please report kill to the Michigan DNR 800-292-7800

**Dog**
- Typically bite the back, flanks, rear and hind legs, causing multiple bite wounds. Dogs may injure or kill livestock, but seldom feed on their kill.

**Common Causes of Livestock Deaths** (Adapted from Wade & Bowns 1984)

- Starvation/exposure
- Internal parasites
- Bacterial & viral diseases
- Pregnancy disease
- Stillbirth
- Boat
- Lightning
- Suffocation
- Poisonous plants & moldy feeds
- Ingestion of nails, wire or other metal objects
- Poisons/chemicals, lead-based paints, or discarded batteries

**Livestock Compensation**

Compensation for verified losses from wolves or coyotes is available. The compensation amount is determined by the MI Department of Agriculture and is based on the animal’s value at the time of the loss. A private wolf depredation fund may be available to help offset the cost difference between the time of the loss and fall market value for young-of-the-year animals lost prior to Sept. 1.

Not all wild animals behave according to these general predator patterns. Other predators (fox, raven, bobcat) may cause similar injuries to livestock. Contact a DNR representative for verification.