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Peter T. Bromley
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

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FUTURE OF WILDLIFE DAMAGE CONTROL AND THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

by Peter T. Bromley*

The driving forces which determine the role of the Cooperative Extension Service in wildlife damage control are (1) the demand for information by the public, (2) the degree of support for programs at the national level, and (3) the level of professionalism exhibited by Cooperative Extension Agents and subject matter Specialists. Analysis of several trends suggests that the Cooperative Extension Service role in Wildlife Damage Control will increase in coming years. The movement of urban people into rural settings will create greater demands for wildlife damage control information. Likewise, the expansion of wildlife population into urban and suburban environments due to creation of new habitats will generate needs for new programs in cities. The emergence of the coyote as a prominent predator on livestock in the East will result in development of new Extension education programs to help farmers deal with coyotes. Each of these increases in conflicts between people and wildlife will be met with educational programs developed and presented by the Cooperative Extension Service. However, due to the increase in social concern over the rights of animals, the quality of extension programs and recommendations will increase. The high degree of professionalism characteristic of Extension workers today will continue and even expand in the future, as better trained people join the system, more research is completed on wildlife damage control problems, and better skills are developed in developing, presenting and evaluating extension programs.

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*Wildlife Extension Specialist, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061.