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(14) CATTLE GRAZING AS PART OF AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TO REDUCE WILDLIFE HAZARDS AT KANSAS CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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Opening in 1972, the Kansas City International Airport (MCI) has had numerous issues concerning white-tailed deer. The first documented deer strikes at MCI were in 1979 and 1980. Between 1996 and 2000, airport operations entered 39 reports of deer inside the fence on the AOA, or 0.72 deer incursions per month, and 28 instances where deer were struck by vehicles on airport property. In one situation, a deer entered the airport terminal by breaking through a large glass window and injured three people. After a Wildlife Hazard Assessment was completed in 1997, Wildlife Services and MCI worked together closely to make several habitat modifications to the airport. Deer surveys during spring 2000 estimated 60 deer per square mile along the perimeter of the AOA. During the summer of 2000, over 800 acres of expired CRP land, mostly fescue, and 400 acres of brome grass, converted from grain production, was placed into a managed cattle grazing program. Over 9 miles of new fence was installed around these pastures that directly border the AOA. Other habitat modifications included removing over 50 acres of wooded tracts that border the AOA. After these modifications were incorporated, deer control was implemented beginning in January 2001. From 2001 to present, air operations entered only 12 reports of deer inside the fence, an 81% reduction compared to 1996-2000, and perimeter deer surveys conducted in fall 2005 estimated 25.5 deer per square mile, a 58% reduction. Although FAA AC 5200-33A section 2-6a discourages livestock grazing on airport property, this specific livestock program has proved beneficial in reducing the attractiveness of the site to deer and other hazardous species. The program has provided income for MCI, prevented 1,200 acres of land from being used for grain production, and allowed cattle to naturally reduce wildlife habitat. No cattle have entered into the AOA.