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# AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' ESTIMATES OF WILDLIFE CAUSING DAMAGE EASTERN STATES

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## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' ESTIMATES OF WILDLIFE CAUSING DAMAGE IN EASTERN STATES

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The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducted a nationwide survey of agricultural producers to determine what proportion of producers were sustaining losses caused by wildlife and which wildlife species were believed to be responsible for the damage. The survey was conducted in August 1989 for the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control (ADC). Results are based on useable responses received from 5,085 farmers in the eastern United States. The results presented here may differ from a previous press release by NASS because losses and animals causing losses were determined specifically for all producers of each commodity rather than all losses to producers as classified by primary farm types.

The estimates of losses and the wildlife species causing the damage were identified by producers in 4 major commodity groups. The major commodity groups were livestock and/or poultry; field crops; vegetables, fruits and/or nuts; and other commodities. When producers were asked to categorize themselves as primarily producers of only 1 commodity group, 55% called themselves livestock/poultry producers, 40% field crop producers, 4% vegetable/fruit/nut producers, and 1% considered themselves producers of other agricultural commodities. Because the "other" category is so small, that group will not be discussed here.

Of all respondents, 89% raised some field crops. Fifty-three percent of these respondents reported losses to those crops. Species most frequently reported to damage field crops were deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), woodchucks (*Marmota monax*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), and birds.

Of all respondents, 74% raised some livestock or poultry, of which 16% reported losses. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), dogs, foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), and birds were cited most frequently as the cause of damage to livestock and poultry.

Of all respondents, 16% raised some vegetables, fruits, or nuts. Forty-two percent of these respondents reported losses. Primary species cited as damaging these crops were deer, birds, raccoons, woodchucks, beavers (*Castor canadensis*), and squirrels (*Sciurus* spp.).

Overall, animal-caused losses to any commodity were reported by 58% of all respondents. Deer were cited most frequently by all producers as damaging their products. Coyotes were the most frequently cited cause of losses for livestock and poultry producers. Other frequently mentioned wildlife damaging agricultural products were birds, woodchucks, and raccoons.