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SPORT HUNTING AS A METHOD OF DAMAGE CONTROL^{1/}

by

Major L. Boddicker^{2/}

Predator damage control is an area of concern to the livestock producer. He is also often the most likely person to choose sport hunting of coyotes as a recreational activity. Sport hunting of problem coyotes can be an effective tool.

Agricultural producers want to know the skills to control depredating wildlife. A high powered rifle, traps, and various related equipment are standard for most livestock production operations.

Through the Extension effort we attempt to help the producer develop wildlife damage control skills. It is also our responsibility to help develop alternatives to aid the livestock producer with persistent wildlife damage problems. The Kansas Card Carrying Coyote Hunter Program is an innovative and thus far very effective alternative wildlife damage control tool.

The program was conceived and implemented by F. Robert Henderson, the Extension Wildlife Damage Control Specialist at KSU during 1972.

Implementation of the Card Carrying Coyote Hunter program was accomplished within the Kansas Extension System. The program was organized and introduced to the county Extension directors. Each county director was allotted 25 cards. The program is a county optional program. Each director who agreed to have the program in his county, was requested to arrange for a coyote hunter school. The school consisted of 4-8 hours of intensive training of hunters on the subject of coyotes. Management, life history, and habits of the coyote were covered. A strong effort was made to stress the positive points for the coyote. Methods of control were presented with an emphasis on developing skills to increase hunter efficiency when seeking an outlaw animal.

When the hunter has successfully completed the school, the county agent can then issue the hunter's card. Figure 1 illustrates the hunter's pledge and the note to the landowner. This card identifies the hunter and indicates his training. It implies no liability from the Extension Service. It does indicate the hunter's acceptance of high ethics and commitment to the program's objectives.

^{1/}Presented to the Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, December 10-12, 1973. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

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County Extension directors then are encouraged to make a roster of the coyote hunters. With the hunter is listed the techniques of control he is able to provide the producer. Several methods are usually available, including trail and sight hounds, trapping, calling and flushing. When a producer forwards a complaint and requests the help of a coyote hunter, the county agent offers the services of the card carrying hunter and gives the producer a choice of who he wants and the technique he wants used on his property. The county Director may also suggest the most efficient and reliable persons on the roster.

Contact is made by the director or the producer with the hunter who then proceeds to work toward solving the control problem. If he is unable to help and damage continues or if the producer did not desire sport hunting on his land in the first place, the state Extension specialist in wildlife damage control may then be called in to provide training to the producer.

The strengths of this program are many:

It is low in cost to the state taxpayer as well as to the livestock producer.

Most of the cost is borne by the hunter on a voluntary basis and he is happy to do it.

It results in a large corps of people with a formal education in coyote damage control.

Coyote damage management is immediately available at a local level.

It develops a multiplier effect. People trained in the techniques of coyote control train others.

Generally, it is an excellent public relations move. The Extension director, livestock producer, and hunter all cooperate together to solve a problem. Local people help their neighbors. The hunter is given a positive role with the landowner. Control method and hunter are selected by the producer to fit his situation.

A noticeable lack of problems has typified this Kansas project. Several problems can be anticipated. Encourage the card carrying hunter to carry personal liability insurance. The Kansas Extension Service accepts no liability for the actions of the hunter or landowner. A high degree of selectivity should be maintained by the county director to insure a high quality hunter.

If you wish further information regarding this program, it is available from F. Robert Henderson, Extension Specialist, Wildlife Damage Control, Ackert Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

KANSAS COYOTE HUNTER

I pledge as a person who enjoys the sport of coyote hunting that I will endeavor to pursue this sport in an ethical manner, respect the rights of others, seek ~~and~~ permission before entering on the private land, accept and study information provided by Kansas State University Extension Service, and use my knowledge to help others. And I will, whenever I can, help livestock producers by seeking out and killing "killer coyotes." At the same time I will respect and study the coyote and its habits.

HUNTER _____

COUNTY AG. AGENT _____



NO 3500

TO THE LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS—

The bearer of this card has agreed to the pledge on the reverse side of this card. Our new educational program provides information on coyotes, the hunting, the control of coyote damage, the importance of seeking permission first before entering upon private lands, and carrying out the hunting in an ethical manner. If you should decide to let this person help you with a coyote problem, we would appreciate a report of any infraction of ethical conduct and/or any success or good will created.

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