University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings | Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

1-1-1973

Kansas Predator Damage Control Program

F. Robert Henderson
Kansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/gpwdcwp

Part of the Environmental Health and Protection Commons

Henderson, F. Robert, "Kansas Predator Damage Control Program" (1973). *Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings.* Paper 470.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/gpwdcwp/470

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

KANSAS PREDATOR DAMAGE CONTROL PROGRAM

by

F. Robert Henderson[1/]

The Extension Division is the off-campus arm of Kansas State University, a land grant university functioning through 105 county Extension offices involving over 265 county Extension workers that are backed up by some 175 state and area subject matter specialists. Kansas is an agricultural state. The production of livestock in Kansas is an important industry to our state and nation.

Our predator damage control program is an educational effort directed at the goal of reducing livestock losses where possible on individual farms and ranches in Kansas. Our program has been in existence since 1954. A very important aspect of our program is that we attempt to control damage rather than to control the predator population. We have found that coyotes eat whatever they can obtain the easiest. Seldom are more than a pair of coyotes involved in killing livestock at one place.

Coyote damage control is sometimes a livestock management problem. By being able to work closely with livestock specialists in a team effort the Extension Service is better able to encourage a practical lasting, solution.

Briefly, this is what the program offers. In Kansas there is a county agricultural Extension agent in each of our 105 counties. The producer who has damage goes to these agents just as they go to them for help on other farm problems. After checking the report of livestock loss the county agricultural Extension agent, in many cases, is able to provide information so that the producer can solve the problem. It is important that the individual livestock producer who experiences losses reports those losses quickly and that he receives assistance quickly.

In talking to the producer, the county agricultural Extension agent can mention the fact that quick action while damage is occurring is very important and that if the producer would want to allow a hunter to attempt to catch the coyote(s) then the agent can show the producer a list of hunters and ask him to choose the one(s) he wants and then the agent can notify the hunters by phone and in turn the hunters notify the producer.

Cards are given to ardent coyote hunters. These cards are signed by hunter and county agent. Each card is individually numbered. County agents keep a list of numbers, names, addresses, phone numbers, type of hunting (calling, sight dogs, trail hounds, trapping, shooting, etc.). In Kansas there are over 600 people who are card holders. In many cases coyote hunters are able to stop losses.

[1/] Wildlife Damage Control Specialist, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

In cases of serious or persistent losses the county agent communicates by phone or letter with a full-time secretary who arranges the Extension specialist's schedule. The specialist then provides:

1. Accurate, prompt and objective assessment of predator damage.

2. Diagnosis and identifies the predator causing the damage.

3. Assistance by training the livestock producer to handle his own problem and supplies him with certain materials where applicable.

4. With the assistance of Extension livestock management specialists, assists with an appraisal of how the producers' management practices relate to predator losses (i.e. disposal of farm carrion, grazing schedules, fencing, etc.)

Support publications now in use include the following:

1. Wildlife Damage Control Handbook for county agents (2 volumes)

2. Controlling Coyote Damage (booklet)

3. How to Call Coyotes (leaflet)

4. How to Skin a Coyote (leaflet)

5. Ten leaflets on controlling damage caused by other species.

6. 4-H Environmental Education Series.

The program in Kansas is unique because it is the only state that has an organized statewide program that is administered through the State Cooperative Extension Service and where that program is the only form of a governmental predator program in the state. The state Forestry, Fish and Game Commission cooperates with Extension through a Memorandum of Understanding that is reviewed once a year. The program is successful. Kansas has 85,000 farms and/or ranches. We have, relative to other western states, very few losses to predators. A total of 385 people complained of losses in Kansas to coyotes during the 2-year period of January 1, 1971 to January 1, 1973.

Our program has the support of Kansas people, both livestock and non-livestock associated public. A resolution adopted by the 1973 Kansas Livestock Association and another resolution adopted by the Kansas Audubon Society testifies to this support.

From an evaluation report covering the two-year period previously mentioned, it was learned that forty-four producers out of 120 stopped their losses after requesting and receiving educational training. The remainder substantially reduced their losses.

Most of the coyotes killed are actually the coyote responsible for the loss so the benefits from one year's work will go on for many years. These coyotes could have perpetuated the killing habit in the neighborhood. These

same people who have learned this technique presumably will benefit substantially each year from their ability to reduce or eliminate coyote damage when and if it occurs again so this will be an annual benefit over the years ahead.

The number of times each method was used to control damage was:

Steel Traps - 102	Firearms - 51
Coyote Call - 38	Management - 23
Dogs - 10	

The number of predators caught were:

Coyote - 1091	Fox - 0
Bobcat - 11	Dog - 19
Skunk - 19	Cat - 1
Raccoons - 17	Badger - 3
Crows - 2	Possums - 3
Owls - 2	

One gratifying aspect is that very few animals other than coyotes were caught. The report does not show this, but the fact remains that most of these could be released essentially unharmed if this was desired. This is possible because of the type of trap used which does not result in broken leg bones either with coyotes or smaller animals.

Each year hopefully, the producers will train others. There were 65 who showed another person how to stop damage; 67 did not.

As you can see, about one-half of the respondents told at least one or more persons something about the control program. How much benefit results from this additional training is impossible to estimate. The benefit would have to be substantial, however. The skills acquired by those trained would be transmitted to an increasing number of people each year. It is certainly a program with long-time benefits on an increasing scale. There were 112 who approved of this educational program as conducted; 8 did not.

In Kansas, we know that a substantial amount of reduction in livestock losses, especially to sheep can be brought about by improved animal husbandry methods. The Extension specialists in the fields of sheep, engineering, and wildlife damage control work together and welcome the opportunity to establish on-the-farm demonstrations.

We are encouraging Kansas sheep and swine producers to engage in on-the-farm research by the construction of predator-proof fences that will protect sheep flocks and young swine.

While we have a long way to go, we are cutting losses of livestock when producers request assistance and are willing to help themselves. We are accomplishing this by spending less money than any other western state. Listed below are the 1973 budgets of wildlife damage control programs for seventeen states.

STATE	TOTAL BUDGET
Arizona	$ 299,000
California	974,000
Colorado	545,000
Idaho	413,000
Montana	383,000
Nevada	346,000
New Mexico	298,000
Oregon	436,000
Utah	321,000
Washington	165,000
Wyoming	487,000
Oklahoma	289,000
Texas	1,322,000
North Dakota	226,500
South Dakota	248,495
Kansas	20,000
Nebraska (14 counties only)	126,500
	$9,146,390

(Department of the Interior Budget Justification Fiscal Year 1973, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife)

Presently there is one specialist involved in our program. Future plans are based on House Bill No. 1304 that was enacted into law by the 1973 legislature. These plans call for the addition of at least one Extension specialist and then, hopefully for the addition of a total of three additional area specialists later on, making a total of five wildlife damage control specialists for the State of Kansas.

HOUSE BILL No. 1304

AN ACT relating to Kansas state university of agriculture and applied science; concerning wildlife damage control.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. As used in this act: (*a*) "Section" means the section of wildlife damage control created by section 3 of this act; and (*b*) "director" means the director of the cooperative agricultural extension service of Kansas state university of agriculture and applied science.

Sec. 2. The purpose of this act is to provide for the development of a state-wide educational program for the control of damage caused by wildlife.

Sec. 3. There is hereby created in the existing cooperative agricultural extension service of Kansas state university of agriculture and applied science a section of wildlife damage control. Employees of the section shall be known as "extension specialists in wildlife damage control," shall be appointed in accordance with K. S. A. 1972 Supp. 76-715 and shall be under the general supervision of the director.

Sec. 4. The section shall: (*a*) Develop a state-wide extension educational program for the control of damage caused by wildlife;

(*b*) instruct farmers and ranchers in effective methods of controlling damage caused by wildlife which will enable the farmers and ranchers to more effectively protect their crops, poultry and livestock;

(*c*) conduct studies on ways to prevent agriculture losses caused by wildlife, including non-lethal methods of control;

(*d*) assist and devote time to youth education programs which will increase the understanding of the management of wild animals; and

(*e*) supply individuals, at cost, with materials not readily available from local commercial sources for use in damage control work.

Sec. 5. In connection with its duties, the section shall cooperate with the Kansas forestry, fish and game commission.

Sec. 6. Subject to the approval of the president of Kansas state university and the state board of regents and within available appropriations, extension specialists in wildlife damage control shall be furnished vehicles and the necessary materials and equipment to carry out their duties and assignments and they shall be paid for travel expense necessarily incurred, including lodging, meals and miscellaneous expense while away from their assigned headquarters.

Sec. 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

With the hiring of additional wildlife damage control specialists we intend to add a service to our program. This service will be to provide for a nominal fee, direct assistance in the removal of specific "hard-to-get" predators causing current damage (when retainer fees are paid this work will be guaranteed).

In support of the on-going program in the future we intend to develop the following:

1. A super 8 movie film on Kansas wildlife damage control programs.

2. A cassette tape and colored slide set for county offices about how to set coyote traps.

3. The second workshop at Kansas State University on wildlife damage control in 1976.

4. Completely revise the booklet, "Controlling Coyote Damage" for next printing.

5. The Wildlife Damage Control Handbook will be revised and brought up-to-date in 1975.

6. FFA Wildlife Damage Control Project aided by Kansas State University Extension Service.

7. FFA advisor handbook to wildlife damage control.

8. 4-H projects under 4-H Environmental Education Series.

   A. "Birds Around You"
   B. "Young Trapper"
   C. "Reptiles and Amphibians"
   D. "Mammals"
   E. "Hunting"
   F. "Fishing"

An Extension program does not operate by itself. Extension specialists in wildlife damage control are educators, not "government hunters." The secret to succeeding with this type of program lies in: (1) the selection of a person (Extension specialist) who has the right combination of motivation, training and experience; (2) the provision of initial and continuous, intensive, on-going educational programs backed by a public and an organization that supports the program and (3) most importantly, the people must really want to solve the predator problem.