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'State Program in South Dakota for Wildlife Damage Management'

Emmett J. Keyser

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

In recent years, wildlife professionals have become increasingly more convinced that wildlife-damage programs must be integrated into existing wildlife management structures if both are to succeed in their missions. South Dakota has managed a state-run Animal Damage Control Program through the Department of Game, Fish and Parks since 1974. This state-run Program has proven successful, in part, as a result of the high degree of communication that has developed between government agencies, institutions, and various constituent groups. Because the Program utilizes a unique blend of funding from federal, state and county sources, the various stakeholders all share in the development of program budgets and direction. In addition to the state-run Program, specific state legislative authority

has been granted providing for the crew of predator control districts where desired. These producer-funded predator control districts have even further encouraged livestock producers at the local level to closely cooperate with the state Animal Damage Control Program resulting in a greater program responsiveness. Because of past successes with the Animal Damage Control Program, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks will be seeking to integrate other wildlife damage control programs into future management strategies for state wildlife populations. As a result, I hope that wildlife managers, sportsmen, livestock interests and others will more clearly recognize the critical role that wildlife damage management plays successfully managing wildlife populations for the benefit of all.