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CURBING THE ILLEGAL USE OF PESTICIDES IN PREDATOR CONTROL

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Abstract: In June 1993, the Agricultural Products Group of FMC responded to reports of alleged illegal, off-label use of its product Furadan 4F and other pesticide products in baiting and poisoning predators. The target of these reported illegal carcass-baiting incidents were principally coyotes (*Canis latrans*), which cause significant losses to the sheep industry. The FMC undertook an effort to determine the scope of the problem and how best to address the issue. This included conducting extensive measurable research among sheep ranchers and agrichemical dealers in 4 selected pilot states: Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Qualitative interviews were also conducted with appropriate federal and state government officials during this time. Based on research results, an awareness campaign was launched in early 1994, targeted at sheep ranchers, ag chemical dealers, ag media, state ag departments, county extension agents, and FMC sales and technical service representatives. The campaign provided information on this illegality, its penalties, and recommendations on effective alternative control methods. A brochure was distributed in cooperation with the American Sheep Industry and prepared with guidance by government animal damage control experts. Research conducted after the campaign showed an 18% increase in the awareness of illegal pesticide baiting as well as a 20% increase in the number of ranchers citing endangering non-target species as a key reason against carcass baiting. The FMC intends to continue its efforts to curb the use of pesticides in predator control by conducting similar programs in other states.

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Key words: *Canis latrans*, coyote, illegal baiting, pesticide, public education, sheep.
