



STATE OF ARIZONA LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD

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Arizona Livestock Loss Board

NEWS RELEASE

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Carcass removal program aims to reduce Mexican wolf depredations on livestock

PHOENIX — The Arizona Livestock Loss Board (ALLB) is implementing a new incentive program that will compensate Arizona ranchers for removing livestock carcasses to locations where they are not accessible to Mexican wolves. The Board will pay ranchers \$250 for each carcass that is made unavailable to wolves.

When the ALLB was formed by the Arizona Legislature in 2015, one of its charges was to research ways to reduce livestock depredations by Mexican wolves. As wolf recovery/management programs from other states were reviewed, one depredation avoidance measure that stood out as being effective was removing livestock carcasses from wolf-occupied areas to avoid wolves being drawn to and remaining in the area as they scavenge on the carcass.

"One of the problems associated with wolves scavenging on livestock carcasses is that it increased occurrence of wolves in areas occupied by other livestock, leading to greater opportunity for depredations," said Jim deVos, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Mexican wolf coordinator.

A substantial benefit is gained when depredations decline. When livestock producers experience reduced economic loss, this benefits the local economy as well as the individual's financial status. In turn, this tends to help build social tolerance to the Mexican wolf recovery program.

There are a variety of methods that can be used to make carcasses unavailable to wolves, including burying onsite, hauling to a landfill, or placing in a wolf-proof fenced area in the vicinity.

Devos pointed to several other states that have had success with carcass removals. In Oregon, one of the take home messages from that state's experiences was a statement that removing bone yards and carcasses from wolf-occupied areas may be the single best action that can be taken to reduce depredations. Part of this was based on following movements of radio-collared wolves, which tended to be long-range, until a carcass was located and the wolves began to center on the area around the carcass.

Both Washington and California support carcass removal as being effective at reducing wolf depredations. In Washington, the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife directed formation of a working group to plan and implement an effective carcass removal program.

In Arizona, at a recent ALLB meeting, a rancher from Springerville observed that in her experience, carcass removal was effective in managing depredations on her working ranch.

ALLB Chairman Ken Van De Graaf said, "After listening to the board member from Springerville discuss her experience and to the staff report from the other states, it was clear that this was a tool that ALLB needed to adopt. As part of the program, the board will compensate ranchers in the amount of \$250 for each carcass that is made unavailable to wolves."

Although ranchers and AZGFD personnel have been removing carcasses for years, the number has been limited by the cost of removals and the limited time that agency personnel have been able to commit to the program given the high demand in managing the wolves themselves.

"When a rancher removes a carcass from their grazing area, it is a benefit to both them and the wolf program, but it is important to recognize that each carcass removal takes time and financial resources to accomplish the removal, said Clay Crowder, AZGFD's assistant director for wildlife management. "As the board implements the financial incentive for removing these dead animals, the hope is that the incentive will increase the rate at which this action occurs."

The Arizona Livestock Loss Board was established in 2015 by the Arizona Legislature with the purpose of both compensating ranchers for depredations and to research and implement programs that will reduce depredations. In 2022, the board approved an expenditure of \$217,514 dollars for these purposes.