Preliminary Estimates of Potential Economic Losses to Stock Growers due to the Presence of Wolves in North Eastern Oregon

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September 2010

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Abstract

While any benefits associated with the introduction of wolves in NE Oregon are primarily nonmarket based, difficult to quantify and widely distributed among possibly millions of people who value wolves, at least some of the costs of introducing wolves in NE Oregon are market based, can be accurately estimated and are focused on the producers and the local economies to which they contribute. North Eastern Oregon includes 5 counties. The livestock producer is on the front line of the wolf/livestock conflict and the losses to the producer both increase the producer's direct costs of doing business and reduces the revenue received in those businesses thereby negatively affecting both sides of their balance sheet. The following economic assessment is based on the assumption that the ranches are in areas where wolves have reached full occupancy and that the cattle are in areas where wolves are present through all seasons of the year.

Employee time is based on the need for additional rider and range work. Assumes April when turn out starts in the county through December when the majority of cattle have been gathered and are returned to headquarters or in the valleys. This employee would be riding in the areas where summer and fall pastures occur, dealing the nervous cattle, keeping cattle where placed, aiding in cattle moves due to inability to use dogs, increased time fencing, etc.

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Decreased Revenues

Reduced conception rate costs
Reduced conception rate by 10% (per Casey Anderson's ****statements)
400 head X 10% = 40 head reduced calves born
560lbs X $1.20 = $672 per head
40 X $672 = $26880.00
$26,880.00/400head = **$67.20 per head**

Depredation calf kills
15 head lost   (Estimate of losses from Wallowa County producers last year)
560 lbs X $1.20 = $672 per head
15 head X $672/head = $10,080 / 400 head = **$25.20 per head**

Reduced weaning/sale weights
35 lbs estimated loss of weaned calf weight (Research paper quotes 60 lbs, local estimate is more conservative)
560 lbs – 35 lbs = 525 lbs/head weaning weight
525 lbs X $1.23 = $645.75 per head (as weight goes down, price per lb goes up)
$672.00 -$645.75 = $26.25/head @ 80% weaning (down after conception and death loss)
$26.25 X 320 head (80% weaning rate of 400 head) = $8,400.00 / 400 head = **$21.00 per head**

Increased Costs

Cow body condition losses

Loss of one body condition score from 5 to 4 (per Casey Anderson's statements)
Cows should be body condition score 5 at calving to avoid jeopardizing the cows health or life
Cost of feeding a cow adequately to regain the 90 to 95 lbs (1 body condition score) during the winter so she is in condition for calving is **$55.00 per head**
(Cost of grain and increased hay value.)

Increased management costs*****

Time spent by manager 1/2 day for 4 months
Assume $5,000 per month $5000 X .5 = $2500 per month
$2500 X 4 months = $10,000
Also
9 months hired help
$150 per day (what paying current range rider to attempt to mitigate wolf loss)
20 days a month
20 X $150 = $3000 per month
9 months X $3,000 = $27,000

Total labor costs $27,000 + $10,000 = $37,000
$37,000 / 400 head = **$92.50 per head**