

Submitter: Elise Flynn  
On Behalf Of:  
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Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

I am a veterinarian and member of a family run cattle ranch in Valley Falls, OR. This past week, we had a personal encounter with a rogue wolf depredating our livestock. Our inability to control and manage this wolf that is not afraid of humans and is known for preying on livestock is incomprehensible. The physical, mental, and emotional toll that this wolf caused our family and neighbors cannot be repaid with money - but it is exactly why a compensation ratio of 7:1 is absolutely deserved. This wolf caused obvious loss of life, loss of production, loss of opportunity, and detriment to overall herd health and wellbeing. The hidden costs are the time spent on protecting ourselves and livestock from the wolf - time that would have normally been spent managing our operation in other ways. Our operation and normal management failed in other aspects because we had to focus on the wolf issue. For example, we are now a week behind in getting a project completed that will get water and shelter to our horses. If not for this wolf, we would have had this project completed before this severe snow storm. Other daily costs, for example, the excessive amount of fuel burned to monitor our feed ground more than typically necessary. And I can't express enough the toll and cost of our emotional and mental wellbeing. From the veterinary aspect, I have dealt with an increasing number of producers that have had a significantly lower breed-up percentage (conception rate) that can only be linked to wolf activity and associated stress. On top of lower conception rates, they are simply missing a significant number of animals when they gather from the forest. These calves that are lost are never deemed a wolf kill, even though that is the most likely cause of loss. Therefore, the producer does not get compensated for them.

This leads me to my biggest frustration and reason that we deserve a high compensation ratio - We had first hand experience this week, that some of the most obvious wolf kills, are not confirmed as such! The ODFW agent could only confirm a dead calf as a wolf kill if it met all of an extremely specific and ridiculous criteria. There were 6 calves killed in the course of 48 hours, that were more than clearly killed by this wolf. Not only were the bodies obliterated by what only a wolf could do, but there was evidence of dragging, tracks, and proof of the wolf's location in the same field via the collar. Despite this smoking gun evidence, only 3 of those were "confirmed" wolf kills. The reason the other 3 were not confirmed - "not enough tissue left to evaluate". We obviously can't control how the wolf leaves his kills, so why should we not get compensated when it is obvious to anyone it was a wolf kill?

If we are going to be forced to live with these dangerous and detrimental creatures in our back yard, then we deserve to be compensated at a 7:1 ratio at the very least.

- Elise Flynn, DVM.