

USDA Releases Sheep and Lamb Predator Death Loss Report

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has released a descriptive report entitled, *Sheep and Lamb Predator Death Loss in the United States, 2004*.

Produced by APHIS' wildlife services program and the National Animal Health Monitoring system (NAHMS), the report provides estimates for sheep and lamb death losses in 2004 broken down by group size and region. The report includes loss estimates for all causes with special emphasis on losses caused by predators. For comparison, the report provides where possible the 1994 and 1999 death loss estimates based on APHIS studies, which are conducted in five-year intervals. The National Agricultural Statistics Service gathered data for the report via a random sample of U.S. producers.

Survey procedures ensured that all sheep producers, regardless of operation size, received the opportunity for survey inclusion. Large operations were sampled more heavily than small operations. About 22,000 operators were contacted during the first half of January 2005 by mail, telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Here are a few highlights from *Sheep and Lamb Predator Death Loss in the United States, 2004*:

- A total of 385,000 lambs and 215,300 sheep were lost due to predator and nonpredator causes in 2004. These totals represent 9.4 and 5.6 percent of lamb crop and sheep inventory, respectively. While the sheep death loss percentage has remained relatively stable since 1994, the lamb death loss percentage declined during the same period.
- Coyotes accounted for the highest percentage of predator death loss in lambs in 1994, 1999 and 2004 (69.4, 64.3 and 64.2 percent of total predator loss, respectively).
- Coyotes were the leading cause of sheep predator loss in 2004, accounting for 51.7 percent of sheep deaths due to predators. Dogs were the second leading cause of loss, accounting for 22.7 percent of predator losses.
- Nonlethal predator control methods were used by 31.9 percent of all operations with sheep in 2004.

Sheep and Lamb Predator Death Loss in the United States, 2004 is available at the NAHMS Web site: <http://nahms.aphis.usda.gov>.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> and click on the "Newsroom" button. For additional information on this topic, contact Teresa Howes at (970) 494-7410 or e-mail: teresa.k.howes@aphis.usda.gov.

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