

## Non chemical control of coyotes

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Coyotes are opportunistic feeders with a diet that includes mice, rabbits, fawns, insects, fruit, berries and other vegetative matter. Landowners become concerned when coyotes prey on livestock. Livestock loss is usually greater in the spring and summer because the demands on coyotes are greater due to pup-rearing and the fact that wild prey are not as vulnerable as they were in deep snow conditions. During this time, young livestock are most vulnerable.

Just because coyotes are present or you see them feeding on carcasses does not mean they are preying on your livestock. Dogs kill more livestock than is commonly believed.

Coyotes are frequent scavengers, so landowners must look for evidence of livestock killing before making conclusions. Look for signs of a struggle and blood around the site. Look for blood hemorrhage under the skin at the point of attack. Bites to a *dead* animal do not hemorrhage because the heart is not pumping blood. Coyotes usually kill by biting the throat and compressing the trachea of sheep-size animals. Their prey usually dies of strangulation, but there is a great deal of damage under the skin in the throat area.

Coyotes usually begin feeding at the flanks or behind the ribs, consuming the liver, heart and lungs first. Coyotes usually kill calves by attacking the hind end.

**Be sure to check state regulations relating to various types of coyote control.**

### **Cultural Methods**

Many ranchers minimize coyote predation by reducing the exposure of vulnerable animals. For example, shortening lambing or calving periods may reduce predation.

Keeping lambs and calves close to the house or hiring a herder until the young gain some size has worked for some producers. Confining sheep at night is one of the most effective means of reducing losses to predation.

Removing dead sheep and cattle is an important practice that eliminates attractions for coyotes and keeps them from getting accustomed to feeding on livestock. A study in Canada showed

that removing livestock carcasses significantly reduced over-winter coyote populations and shifted coyote distributions out of livestock areas.

## **Exclusion**

Coyotes can be kept out of corrals or livestock pens by a net-wire fence attached tightly to the ground. You can prevent climbing by adding a charged wire to the top of the fence. You can discourage digging by placing barbed wire at ground level or burying a wire apron.

Electric fencing has met with limited success as a coyote barrier. In addition to being expensive, the 10 to 13 strands of wire become difficult to maintain. Coyotes pass under the fences at low spots. If the fence is tight to the ground, it may cause a short.

## **Frightening Devices**

Frightening devices work for short periods of time. These devices are primarily useful to deter coyote predation until other practices can be put into place. Lights over corrals are one of the most effective short-term frightening devices. Propane exploders and sirens will scare coyotes but their use is limited because of the disruption to livestock.

Radios tuned to stations with human voices rather than music will temporarily deter coyotes.

A parked vehicle may deter coyotes in rural areas, especially if it is occasionally moved. When coyotes get used to it, it makes a comfortable coyote hunting blind.

## **Trapping**

The most common method of controlling a coyote problem is through foothold traps or snares. Traps hold coyotes by the foot until they can be dispatched. Snares are placed in trails or at places coyotes crawl through fences. When the coyote passes through, the snare tightens on their neck and strangulation occurs. Landowners should contact an experienced trapper if they employ these methods because there are complex and detailed techniques that will make these methods most effective.

If you're going to trap, taking time to learn how to properly trap or snare coyotes is a worthwhile undertaking. There are excellent DVD's available through trapping supply sources online. Without a doubt, the best way to learn to trap or snare is through training from an experienced trapper.

The Collarum<sup>®</sup> is designed to capture coyotes and other canines by throwing a cable loop over their head and around the neck. The end of the capture loop is anchored in the ground and the animal is held like a dog on a chain. This trap may be desirable in areas where people, pets and other domestic animals may come in contact with it.

## **Other Methods**

If they are properly selected and trained, guardian animals such as llamas, donkeys and dogs can successfully protect sheep from coyotes. The protective nature of dogs makes them effective. Donkeys and llamas usually have an inherent dislike of dogs and other canids, including coyotes. Donkeys respond to intruding coyote by braying, baring teeth, kicking and biting.

Coyotes may respond to predator calls. This method of coyote control may be the most practical for landowners that only have occasional coyote problems. In its simplest form, coyote calling takes advantage of a coyote's response to a dying rabbit sound. When the coyote comes to investigate, you can shoot it. Again, DVD's or help from an experienced coyote caller will provide initial knowledge.

### **Acknowledgments**

Much of the information presented here was adapted from S.E. Hygnstrom (1994) in *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE. Ideas from Colorado State University Extension were also included.

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