

**16 MARCH 2007**

**WS Livestock Protection Funding Requested**

This week, the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI), the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Public Lands Council were joined by 24 state sheep and cattle organizations and local and state agriculture and industry groups in support of increased federal appropriations for livestock protection efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services' (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS).

One of the key programs for a healthy sheep and cattle industry in America is the WS livestock protection program. With well over 250,000 sheep and nearly 150,000 cattle lost to predators each year, the livestock protection program is vital to the economic survival of the livestock industry. The value of livestock lost to predators and predator-control expenses are the major expenses of livestock production. Costs of control efforts, including fuel, continue to increase.

Without additional federal funding to support existing western livestock-protection programs, predation-management expertise will be lost and livestock grazing in some areas will be jeopardized. The associations joined in requisitioning an additional \$8.3 million for USDA, APHIS and WS for livestock protection. The program is a partnership of federal, state, county and private funding, yet collectively cooperators have been carrying more and more of the funding responsibility.

"This funding effort is a priority for ASI and given the benefit to livestock producers, this demonstration of support from the broad coalition of organizations will clearly assist the U.S. Congress in appropriations of funds next year," stated Peter Orwick, executive director for ASI.

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