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News Release

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10 W 15th Street, Suite 3100 · Helena, MT 59626

2010 Montana and United States Cattle Predator Losses
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For more information contact: Christel Pachl or Thomas Chard at 1-800-835-2612.

Montana cattle producers lost 23,000 head of cattle, weighing 500 lbs or more, and 57,000 calves, weighing less than 500 lbs, to all causes during 2010, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office. A special report released every five years details the types of cattle and calf losses and the value of the losses.

During 2010, a total of 1,000 head of cattle and 4,200 calves were lost to predators. The total value of the cattle lost to predators was $1.1 million dollars and the value of calves lost to predators was $1.6 million. Wolves were the largest cause of cattle losses with 44.0 percent of the total lost during 2010, while coyotes were the largest cause of calf losses with 46.9 percent during 2010.

A total of 22,000 cattle and 52,800 calves were lost to non-predator causes. The value of non-predator losses was $43.6 million. The value of cattle losses were $23.3 million and calf losses were $20.3 million. The leading categories of non-predator cattle losses were: unknown non-predator with 24.3 percent, other non-predator with 19.7 percent, and respiratory problems with 16.9 percent. The leading categories of non-predator calf losses were weather-related problems with 27.1 percent, calving problems with 22.4 percent, and unknown non-predator with 15.4 percent.

The use of non-lethal predator control practices were published in this report. The most common types of non-lethal predator practices utilized by Montana cattle producers were: carcass removal, 36.9 percent; guard animals, 34.6 percent; culling, 30.1 percent; frequent checks, 26.6 percent; and night penning of animals, 19.8 percent.

In the United States, cattle and calf losses from predators and non-predator causes totaled 3.99 million head (excluding Alaska) during 2010. This represents 4.3 percent of the 93.9 million cattle and calves in the United States at the beginning of 2010. Losses of cattle weighing more than 500 pounds totaled 1.73 million head or 43.4 percent of total losses. Calves weighing less than 500 pounds lost to all causes totaled 2.26 million head or 56.6 percent of total losses.

U.S. cattle and calf losses from animal predators totaled nearly 220 thousand head during 2010. This represented 5.5 percent of the total deaths from all causes and resulted in a loss of $98.5 million to farmers and ranchers. Coyotes and dogs caused the majority of cattle and calf predator losses accounting for 53.1 percent and 9.9 percent, respectively.

Cattle and calf losses from non-predator causes totaled 3.77 million head or 94.5 percent of the total losses during 2010. Respiratory problems represented the leading cause of non-predator deaths, accounting for 28.0 percent, followed by digestive problems at 13.4 percent.

Non-lethal predator control measures cost farmers and ranchers throughout the United States $188.5 million during 2010. Use of guard animals was the most common method at 36.9 percent. Exclusion fencing, frequent checking, and culling were the next most commonly used methods of preventing cattle and calf losses at 32.8 percent, 32.1 percent, and 28.9 percent, respectively.

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