

July 2, 2008

Predator Control

Dear Editor:

The U.S. House of Representatives may consider the fiscal year 2009 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and related agencies any time following the 4<sup>th</sup> of July break until the early August congressional recess.

Given the recent political activity of animal rights groups, and as sheep producers from this area, we must heed warning of any possible attempt by the animal rights congregation via Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR-4) to limit the USDA's Wildlife Services' (WS) ability to assist farmers, ranchers, landowners, cities, airports and others whom benefit from their services.

In past years, Rep. DeFazio has attempted to limit the lethal control that WS utilizes; thankfully, he has been unsuccessful thus far. WS has the authority to assist in solving problems that are created when wildlife causes damage to agricultural property; feedlots; domestic livestock; civil aircraft; fish stock; commercial forestry; nursery and game animals; endangered species; and field crops, fruits and nuts. In addition, it also assists American industries; federal, state and local governments; and private citizens to help protect human health and safety at the workplace, at public sites and at American homes.

WS uses lethal control in a larger wildlife management plan that incorporates non-lethal alternatives as well. Non-lethal management strategies are a large part of what is done in these management plans, but in some scenarios, lethal control is the only viable option. WS needs every tool, whether it's lethal or non-lethal, to effectively address the preservation of human health and safety as well as protect our livestock, pets and property.

Livestock losses to predation are estimated to be worth \$18.3 million in the sheep industry and \$51 million in the cattle industry. In the absence of effective predation management tools, these losses increase two to three times more. Without the crucial support of WS, we, and many other ranchers, would not be able continue. The United States produces the cheapest, safest and most abundant food supply in the world. If we allow special interest groups to dictate how we raise and provide this food supply, we will have to look toward other countries, like we do now with oil, to provide food.

Sincerely,

