



RE: WDFW Wolf Comments

Date: April 11, 2022

To: Washington Department of Wildlife

These comments are from the Yakima County Farm Bureau (YCFB).

The YCFB is a grass roots organization with 2700 members consisting of farmers and ranchers with operations both large and small as well as other folks with interest in agriculture affairs in Yakima and Klickitat Counties.

The YCFB has been following the Washington Department of Wildlife's (WDFW) management of wolves with great concern.

At the inception of the program, WDFW maintained that wolves in Washington State would rarely attack livestock, but in the event that livestock were attacked the Department would faithfully remove the offending animals.

The YCFB believes that WDFW has failed on both accounts: 1) Accurately predict wolf habits and feeding preferences and 2) Faithfully remove offending wolves.

The proposed rule change in question which places more stringent requirements upon livestock operators to implement non-lethal measures will allow WDFW to obfuscate from its commitments to an even greater degree.

To date, the suite of non-lethal measures prove weak and useless. Add the Departments poor performance at removing problem wolves in a timely basis, and it is no wonder that livestock losses have mounted at an alarming rate. This plan places even an more onerous burden on livestock producers to find a real working non-lethal measure when it is very obvious that State and Federal Government must step up with a serious commitment to find and implement a real working solution.

The YCFB understands that such a measure may well now exist and question why it was discovered through scientific research ten years ago yet it is not being tested more fully and implemented?

The basic concept involves adding a shock feature to wolf collars and sending the trigger signal whenever a wolf fitted thusly, sending the predator away from areas that need protection. The study occurred in a Northern central State (Wisconsin?) and wolves shocked just three times over a brief period would not visit a bait station for a month after the shocking was ended.

Wolves were also adverse to visit pastures they were previously visiting once shocks were applied.

The YCFB believes that with present technology, it would be an achievable task to add a transmitter function to the Radio Activated Guard box (RAG) that once a wolf signal is received, the RAG box sends the radio trigger signal back to the shock collar.

Further, the YCFB believes it is obvious that Ranchers are barred from going forth and begin tranquilizing wolves and placing specially designed collars on wolves. Only the Department has the resources and the legal position to begin such a program.

Rather than forsake livestock producers to depredation, WDFW must step up, fully accept the responsibility it assumed in the wolf program and make good on its commitments to provide real protection to our hard working Ranchers.

Thank you,

Mark Herke

President, Yakima County Farm Bureau

