

Landowner Survey Deals with Predator Losses

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SAN ANGELO - Have predators got your goat? If so, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service wants to know about it.

The agency is currently polling producers and landowners in a seven-county area by questionnaire to determine what impact predation and increased deer and feral hog numbers are having on agricultural operations and the local and regional economies they support.

The seven West Central Texas counties involved in the survey are Fisher, Concho, Lampasas, Runnels, Coleman, Mills and Tom Green.

The survey addresses several issues, said Bill Thompson, AgriLife Extension economist at San Angelo. They include:

- Determining losses from all predator species to establish how those losses and their associated costs can be reduced.
- The effect of feral hogs on local and regional economies through not only their impact to crops, livestock and wildlife, but also contamination of watersheds with E. coli and other communicable diseases. The questionnaire aims to establish better estimates of the total losses the animals cause. With sound figures, increased taxpayer-financed control measures may be justified.
- Deer losses: Increased deer populations are negatively affecting crop producers in some areas. Factors such as dry conditions and high fences may be to blame, but definitive questions in the survey will help determine if a more widespread problem exists.

The survey is being cosponsored by the Southern Rolling Plains Cotton Producers Association, the Sheep and Goat Predator Management Board, Agrilife Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services.

“The surveys have just been mailed, so if you receive a survey please take time to complete it and return it in the postage-paid envelope,” Thompson said.

Producers living in one of the seven counties polled who did not receive a survey or who have questions can contact Thompson at 325-653-4576 or w-thompson@tamu.edu .

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