



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

USDA
NM Farm Service Agency

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For Immediate Release
March 17, 2010

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Release 0005.10

FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES ASSISTANCE FOR WOLF-RELATED LIVESTOCK LOSSES

ALBUQUERQUE, NM - Salomon Ramirez, State Executive Director, New Mexico Farm Service Agency (FSA), announced availability of federal assistance to producers who suffered livestock losses resulting from wolf depredation. According to Ramirez, loss benefits are approved through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) as authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. Wolf depredation has been determined to be an eligible loss condition under ELAP for livestock death losses occurring on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011.

Under the ELAP provisions, FSA may spend up to \$50 million per year nationwide to provide emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires and, now, wolf depredation, losses that are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. To date, wolf depredation is the only loss condition approved on a National level as an eligible loss condition for livestock death losses under ELAP provisions.

The Mexican gray wolf was federally listed as an endangered species in 1976. In 1998, after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Federal Register publication of the Mexican gray wolf final 10(j) rule allowing for the establishment of a non-essential experimental population in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA), 11 wolves were reintroduced into the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The BRWRA is entirely within portions of the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila National Forests in Arizona and New Mexico.

Although the majority of livestock loss, in this particular area of the state, cannot be attributed to wolf depredation, according to preliminary economic loss data, livestock loss through verified wolf depredation in New Mexico is estimated at nearly \$70,000 dollars for 2008 and 2009 combined. Eligible producers may receive indemnity payments equal to approximately 65 percent of the value of qualified livestock losses.

“In 2008 and 2009, livestock producers in several counties in the New Mexico wolf range, had U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service verified incidents of depredation by Mexican gray wolves,” said Ramirez. “This is important to note because ELAP benefits are available to only those producers who can provide verifiable evidence of livestock losses.”

Documents providing verifiable evidence may include, but are not limited to insurance documents, tax records and veterinary records. As previously mentioned, third party verification is acceptable from a reliable source such as the USDA's Wildlife Services or similar entity.

"FSA is pleased that, through the efforts of partnering federal agencies and livestock organizations, decision makers in Washington, D.C. recognized the need for and the value of implementing this program," said Ramirez.

Caren Cowan, Executive Director, for the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association adds, "The livestock industry in New Mexico greatly appreciates the efforts that the Farm Service Agency has taken to address the losses that livestock producers are suffering. The cooperative approach taken by the FSA and other federal agencies is what is needed to maintain livestock production in the face of wildlife reintroductions."

"This is an excellent example of another USDA agency partnering to assist livestock producers directly affected by the Mexican gray wolf", stated Corbin Newman, Regional Forester for the Southwestern Region, Forest Service. "This federal assistance enhances partnerships with producers who are essential for successful restoration of the Mexican gray wolf," he said.

Signup for ELAP benefits is ongoing. Producers should contact their local FSA office to discuss program provisions as they relate to each individual operation.

For more information on ELAP and all programs administered by the Farm Service Agency, please contact the local USDA Service Center or visit the national website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nm.

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