

NMCGA ON THE TRAIL...

For immediate release: February 14, 2022

Forty-seven head killed in day one of Forest Service sharpshooter operations

Attorney Karen Budd-Falen submitted a letter Thursday, February 10 on behalf of New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA) and others to the National Resources Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Regional Attorney of the Department of Agriculture requesting a specific daily count of the number of estray cattle killed each day of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) operation of aerial gunning in the Gila National Forest and Wilderness. Numbers were provided to NMCGA from APHIS Wildlife Services Thursday evening and report stated "47 head of cattle were removed, and no cattle were observed with ear tags or brands, despite intentional observation of each animal prior to engagement. Operations will continue tomorrow" Friday, February 11.

"The repercussions of gunning-down and leaving of cattle carcasses in the Gila will be felt by the agriculture community and many New Mexican's for some time," said Bronson Corn, President-Elect NMCGA. "Those animals could have entered the food chain and been of benefit to many, instead they are being consumed by predators that already have the natural inclination to depredate producer's livestock. The overall situation and the waste of protein is saddening. "

An example of the Gila operation waste including actual meat prices, from mid-level and high-end grocery shelves in New Mexico's state capitol – Santa Fe:

200 cattle x 440 lbs (the average amount of edible beef one cow produces) = 88,000 lbs of beef. A quick google shows that 1lb of ground beef chuck Walmart in Santa Fe costs \$4.48. This is roughly \$394,240 worth of beef, if it was all processed as ground beef, which is being wasted. Alternatively, Santa Fe's Trader Joes sells 1 lb of ground beef chuck for about \$6.00 per pound, tallying the total waste at a whopping \$528,000. The value left behind both monetarily and nutritionally from the gunning-down of estray cattle in the Gila is too momentous to disregard.