



## **Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association**

3901 Joppa Ave. South, St. Louis Park, MN 55416 – Phone & Fax: (952) 920-9512

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### **Timber Wolves in Minnesota**

#### **The Solution Is ....,**

The Minnesota State Cattleman's Association does not want to see the timber wolf ever become extinct. Wolves like all wild animals have their place in the wild. However, wolves must be controlled by sensible management and can not be allowed to hazard and kill domestic livestock.

Timber wolves are no longer threatened in Minnesota and should be immediately removed from federal protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 and full management responsibility returned to the State of Minnesota.

Wolves were recently delisted in Minnesota for 18 months until a law suit forced the US Fish & Wildlife Agency to relist them again in 2009.

Minnesota managed the wolves for 18 months with no issues. Livestock owners were allowed to defend their livestock from attacking wolves.

Problem wolves were dealt with in a humane and effective manner by livestock owners themselves or federal wildlife control officers under a memorandum of agreement between Minnesota and the USDA/Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)-Wildlife Services Agency.

#### **Wolf Recovery Is A Success – Federal Law Requires They Be Delisted.**

The Timber wolf population has substantially increased since their listing in 1974. Wolves now range freely throughout the northern half of Minnesota, northern Wisconsin and the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

- The federally mandated timber wolf recovery plan for Minnesota called for a recovered population of between 1,251 to 1400 wolves.
- The most recent survey of Minnesota's wolf population (winter of 2007-08) conducted by the Minnesota Department of Natural

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Resources (DNR) estimated the wolf population at about 3,000 wolves. The DNR survey indicates that about 503 wolf packs exist in Minnesota and their average size is about 5 wolves per pack. The survey also indicated that between 500 - 550 lone wolves exist that are not associated with a specific wolf pack.

- Since their listing under the ESA, wolves have extended their range back into many of the state's agriculture areas where previously there had been no problem with wolves. Wolves killing domestic livestock, including cattle, horses, sheep, and poultry continues to be a problem in agriculture areas.

### **Timber Wolf Impact on Minnesota's Cattleman**

Under federal protection since 1974, (except for the 18 months they were delisted in 2007-08) - Minnesota Cattleman have and continue to endure the senseless killing and maiming of valuable livestock by wolves.

- It is a federal felony to injure or kill a wolf except to protect the life of a human. It is a federal felony to injure or kill a wolf that is the act of killing a baby calf, cow, horse, sheep or other domestic pet.
- Timber wolves not only kill livestock, they stalk and chase cattle resulting in mother cows aborting their baby calves, cattle going off feed, and animals are injured due running through fences or from falling as they flee from an attack.
- Under federal protection the government response to wolf problems in agriculture areas is reactive, not proactive. Trapping or removal of wolves is done only after wolves have already killed valuable livestock.
- Cattlemen are forced to employ unsound management practices to prevent losses to wolves. Of particular concern is the increased concentration and confinement of cattle during the winter months, calving season and summer pasture.
- Unwarranted concentration presents a health hazard to cattle, increases the cost of manure management and the potential for accidental incidents of pollution. In the late summer wolves often

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stalk and kill cattle on summer pasture, denying cattle summer feed and increasing the cost of producing a marketable calf crop.

- Wolves are not a problem in the truly wilderness areas of Minnesota but when present in agriculture areas they must be aggressively managed. Livestock owners must be allowed to defend their livestock against wolf attacks.
- Stalking and chasing. Cattlemen must have the right to kill timber wolves that stalk their herds. It makes absolutely no sense to wait until wolves kill livestock before protective action can be taken. When stalking occurs professional wildlife officers must be employed to remove the wolves before they kill domestic livestock.

### **Minnesota's State Management Plan – Summarized**

The Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association was one of many livestock groups that helped formulate a comprehensive state wolf management plan. The plan ensures that the wolf population remains above the ESA recovery goal of 1,251 to 1400 wolves and wolves are properly managed where a conflict between humans and wolves occur.

Minnesota adopted that plan into state law in 2000 in preparation for delisting of the wolf. Minnesota's Management Plan provides for;

- Minimum statewide winter population of 1,600 or more wolves. The DNR conducts formal population surveys at least once every 5 years.
- Livestock and pet owners may shoot or destroy wolves that pose a threat to their livestock or pets.
- Control of wolves that threaten livestock or pets must be undertaken by government wildlife control specialists when a problem occurs.
- A hunting or trapping season on wolves as big game animals in Minnesota may not be opened until wolves have been delisted in Minnesota for at least 5 years.

**Note: This plan is not in effect – wolves remain under ESA protection.**

This document was first issued in January 1978 and has been periodically updated to reflect changes in the status of the wolf and state law.