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# Wildlife Depredation

Senate Select Committee on Upper Sacramento Economic, Resource & Rangeland Issues

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE  
SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
UPPER SACRAMENTO ECONOMIC, RESOURCE  
& RANGELAND ISSUES  
SENATOR JIM NIELSEN, CHAIRMAN

Public Hearing on

**WILDLIFE DEPREDATION**



April 8, 1988  
Willows, California

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SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

UPPER SACRAMENTO ECONOMIC,  
RESOURCE & RANGELAND ISSUES

SENATOR JIM NIELSEN  
Chairman

City Council Chambers  
Willows, California

April 8, 1988

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Patricia Hixson, Committee Secretary

Select Committee on Upper Sacramento Valley  
Economic, Resource and Rangeland Issues  
Wildlife Depredation  
April 8, 1988  
Willows, California

CHAIRMAN JIM NIELSEN: I'd like to move everything very quickly along. I would appreciate your testimony being as brief as possible and to the point. This is the first hearing of the Select Committee on the Upper Sacramento Valley Economic, Resource and Rangeland Issues. It is a select committee of the Senate with the intent of focusing very specifically on concerns of this region. Although you might be surprised to know that I see two of my friends from Napa in here today that have some relevant information to the concern that's effecting us all over the state. So what we are going to be discussing here today is not only applicable to the Sacramento Valley region, it is to the entire State of California, the issue of wildlife depredation on the farms and ranches of this state.

Our desire is to gain a better understanding of the magnitude of this problem. It is certainly not a new one. I've sat on the Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee all of my entire tenure in the State Senate. I think I know an awful lot about the issue. Also come at it from having been in the cattle business and the dairy business and having lost a lot of livestock myself. It's very evident that this isn't only a problem of depredation of livestock either. It's a problem of destruction of property and farm crops themselves. Maybe some of you are surprised it begins to be a problem even in more urban areas where many, many household pets are being killed by predators for a variety of reasons, not the least of which the amount of parks that have been built up around cities and the urban population's encroaching more and more on habitat areas.

There are many, many emotional appeals about "animal rights" and it certainly is a high profile issue now. What we also have to seek is some degree of balance. And as I have argued the coyotes and mountain lions and other such animals aren't like household pets. They are vicious wild animals and we have to live in harmony with them, but sometimes they cause some very, very serious problems.

I think that you will be hearing testimony today about some of our wildlife that are serious problems that you might not even think, like wild pigs. I spent a couple of days hiking over the lava hills of Tehama County a few weeks ago with some of my staff and Bob

Kearsteens (?) and we saw an awful lot of evidence, in fact, of mountain lions as well as wild pigs.

So I hope that our committee hearing today will focus on the nature of this problem and elevate it so that more people throughout the state understand that there's a problem of some significance. And I do see some cause for possible legislative action. I'm not quite sure what. But I can tell you most assuredly one action that must occur, even in a greater way than it has, and in varying degrees we've been able to cooperate, but the various entities of government and the private sector in full cooperation. The issue of the resolution to Carrizo Plain, Mr. John Ross has been heavily involved in that, and may want to comment. We have a very current problem and concern here regarding what will happen to the Dye (?) Creek.

And what we're always trying to elicit is a lot of cooperation, a lot of good management, and not antagonism. And just as I think livestock producers or farmers have to pay respect to wildlife, those who are supporters or defenders of wildlife have to respect that those predators, etc. need to live in harmony with the producers of livestock and crops in the State of California. And again I would say in areas like Los Angeles, a lot of folks don't like their household pets being attacked and damaged. And there have been occasions where human beings have been attacked. A few years ago we had a mountain lion in downtown Chico. They do exist.

And with that said, I would like to proceed with the testimony today. Beginning our testimony is probably one of the real experts in the nature of this problem, Mr. Merlin Fagan who represents the Farm Bureau in Sacramento; a good friend of mine; ag leadership graduate. And he knows how to be brief in committee hearings.

MR. MERLIN FAGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Good morning.

MR. FAGAN: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and audience. With that admonishment, I'll try to keep it short. We sure appreciate, Senator Nielsen, your effort to expose this problem. We're finding from our members that the problem is becoming more and more prevalent throughout the rural parts of California. So it does need more exposure and we certainly are finding more problems and more farmer/rancher frustration over dealing with the problem. And we hate to characterize it as a rural versus urban problem, but it'd be our belief that if this was happening in urban areas as much as it's a problem in rural areas, that there'd be a solution much more quickly if there were \_\_\_\_\_ stories in the L.A. Times and the San Francisco Chronicle that we're now beginning to get, through your efforts and other rural legislators efforts, we would probably have solved this or come up with better mitigation right away. So this type of occasion is very critical to get the members and get some of the ag representatives and key legislators to recognize the

problem and get the public to hear more about it.

But first off, I'd like to say that our memberships -- our members and the membership cherish the outdoors and the wildlife as much as anybody. But they also have to make a living. And many times we're finding -- and much more often it's occurring -- that this wildlife, whether it's mountain lions or deer or elk or wild hogs or water fowl, that we're concentrating those populations in small areas through refuges or other types of actions that, as that habitat dries up or is overfed, that the wildlife -- as you would expect they would -- look over the fence and see green pastures or green crops or livestock. And they're then stressed and they go over that fence and they try to survive. And the problem is that that begins to be very costly for farmers and ranchers. And it's not that we don't want to pay our share or recognize that we have some requirements to sustain our share, but oftentimes we're shouldering more than our fair share, we believe.

So our members, in the last couple of years, have become more and more assertive that something needs to be done. So they've passed a policy. Our house of delegates and our leadership got together and said, we have to do something about this. And so I as a staff person had new direction. We sat down and we looked at the state law, and we have to recognize that the Constitution says that the wildlife is that of the peoples. And so it's not just the farmer and rancher that should support it, but the Constitution says it belongs to all of the people.

But also, the Fish and Game Code says a number of things, and it has some general policy. But it also says that when problems occur and there are economic losses, that the species or the population or the animals or whatever the problem is, you should manage it to alleviate economic losses within tolerable limits. And so we said, well that's great, but clearly it's not a priority for Fish and Game yet to do that. Why is that the case? And so we tried to come to grips with it. So we conducted some surveys. And so I'll go through those quickly. But also, we've been sponsoring some legislation. We had AB 673 by Stan Statham and SB 2664 by Senator Doolittle, and also your involvement has been very helpful.

So although it may be a little tedious, I'd like to go through some of the survey reports. How it started is some of the county farm bureaus developed it and we refined. And we sent it out and have gotten some really enlightening information. It shows clearly a trend of increase of problems.

So I'll go through about five or six of those, Mr. Chairman, if that's okay. Our first one is from Shasta County and it's a mountain lion problem. In 1982, his losses he attributed of \$600; '83 was \$900; '84 was \$1200; '85 it was \$1500; '86 it was \$1800; and he believes that the problem is not getting any better.



Then we go from Shasta County over to the north coast where there's some elk that have recently been brought in the last decade, more or less, and the numbers have greatly increased. And this rancher has sat down and quantified for the last three years how much these elk would consume. He talked to some biologists, and he's estimated over the last three years that it's cost him nearly \$36,000 to maintain that growing elk herd that was brought in from southern California. And it's damaged fence, it's disrupted his pastures, it's consumed hay in his fields. So he's done a very good job of quantifying that. It happens that the elk will, if they come up to a fence that's not easily knocked over because it has steel posts, all the elk will lean up against the steel post until it bends over. So you drive through the area and you see all these fences just caved over, and that's rather a serious problem because then the cattle begin to move around and can move on to the highway.

Still in Mendocino County, a neighbor to this person has estimated that his losses or contributions to maintaining wildlife has been in the neighborhood of \$18,000.

And so we think those are examples of where that shouldn't be expected to be a tolerable limit for an individual to make those types of contributions to maintaining wildlife.

And we also find that other types of carnivores or omnivores besides mountain lions and coyotes cause problems, and that's bears. And we have some very enlightening results of beekeepers. In Placer County we have a beekeeper who estimated his losses in 1985 of nearly \$3600 from bears coming in and tearing up his beehives, and in '86 it was \$7300. And this person was frustrated enough that he has even videotaped some of these occurrences. And you would think it's not isolated if you're able to go out and videotape the occurrence.

And we have, in Lassen County, we have waterfowl losses. I've mentioned some of the others, but waterfowl is also a serious problem. And the waterfowl will go out into a rice field or alfalfa field and eat the tender shoots. And this person in '83 estimated his losses at \$2200; '83 was \$1600; '84 was \$3500; '85 was \$2800; and in '86 it was \$3700. So we can see those are fairly large figures.

And then another person that was from Shasta County who is also a beekeeper had a bear problem. But 1985, it was such -- he would put up electric fences, as you are required by law to keep the bear out. But it happens that the bears enjoy honey so much that going through an electric fence now and then is evidently no great sacrifice. And so this person was having troubles off and on. But in 1985 he estimates the losses due to bear at \$15,000. Now, for a small beekeeper that's a very substantial contribution to maintaining the wildlife, and of course he can't keep that up. And he got so frustrated that he took some actions that later caused him some very serious hardships.

Also, again in Modoc County, we had a grower who grows wild rice. His losses have

varied from \$4,000 in 1983; to \$8,000 in '84; to \$16,000 in '85; in 1986 to \$20,000. And that's where geese and other waterfowl will come in and just eat up the tender shoots of wild rice, or the whole plant. They'll go in and eat the whole plant and just go through methodically. If you get a big flock, they can go through many acres in a very brief period of time. And also this person has had problems with coyote and deer.

So we think that those give some very good indications of the nature of the problem that is out there. We also got some information from one of the few people who has ever gone through all the hoops. It's a man who is in rural Colusa County who is a sheep grower who doesn't have a telephone, who basically lives on a sheepherder's trailer. And he's habitually been losing some sheep to mountain lions. And so finally he went to the border control and was granted the fact that his loss should be reimbursed, filled out all the forms. Everything was okay until it started going through legislative process. And so his \$840 claim was deleted from the deficiency bill. One particular legislator felt very strongly. And so this one man who had done all that he was suppose to do was denied that. So that's again some of the frustrations that one can go through.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: I remember the day. I was there.

MR. FAGAN: Yeah. We've all gone through a lot of frustrations, haven't we, Senator?

Then we turn again to some other examples of the magnitude of problems which is what the committee is trying to obtain. We had a story in our Ag Alert recently about the elk herd that's prospering in Colusa County. And it goes on to say how this one ranch estimates that he's losing the larger chunk of \$15,000 a year and is under-utilizing about 30 percent of his pastures to the free roaming elk that were brought into the adjoining county, but didn't find that habitat as attractive as going over the hill and disrupting some cattle operations in Colusa County. And it mentions how they've had trouble with the elk doing roughly what I characterized before, but they're knocking out like 2,000 feet of fencing at a time. This particular ranch happens to be near Highway 20. Since the elk knocked down the fence it allows the cattle to wander onto Highway 20, This particular owner is very concerned that somebody is going to get killed and that he will be held liable to those losses. So here we have another example of where the wildlife may make a landowner liable to some very significant losses if, in fact, his cattle were to wander onto the highway. Somebody coming back from the weekend from somewhere on Highway 20, and the unfortunate occurrence of somebody being killed in that wreck, and then this person being drug into court because it was his cattle that did it, even though it may have been initially caused by the elk.

So those are some of the examples. And part of the problem we're running into is that people who don't come in contact with this wildlife very often still have the image of the Wylie Coyote or the Bambi or the Yogi The Bear, that these are creatures that are



all very nice, and they certainly are. But they also can cause serious problems. So for the urban people, they have one experience which may be cartoon characters. But those of us in the rural areas see quite a different side on occasion and certainly have some different experiences. It can be very costly -- or has been very costly in the types of contributions we make.

So, to summarize the surveys that we receive, we see primarily five species that cause problems. It's the coyote, mountain lions, elk/deer, and waterfowl, and bear; and occasionally, wild hogs. We see the problems and losses are increasing. We believe that Fish and Game is not seeing this as a priority. It's not meant to be a criticism of theirs, but a lot of it is they haven't been a lot of publicity. We're just beginning to gain more information as you so kindly pointed out. We probably have as good as information as anybody, more than most because we have taken the time to survey our membership to gather more information. Many people take the intuitive decision or inclination that this isn't a problem because they don't hear much about it. That's not the case as we're finding out. So we think it may and should become more of a priority for Fish and Game to deal with the agricultural losses. They do a fairly good job on livestock, not as well as we would like on occasion, but they do fairly quickly follow up. But when it's other crop losses or farming losses, it's not a very high priority and they appear to move fairly slowly to try to mitigate it.

I'll conclude now by saying we believe that the problem will get worse as government acquires more lands and manages them as parks or as wild lands. So we see a trend that the problem will become greater, and that if we don't address the agricultural concern now, it may become worse because as the resident wildlife populations are increased by these acquisitions, they often exceed the habitat and then the problem begins by the wildlife moving on to the farmers fields that are irrigated or his crops or his livestock because the wildlife is just trying to survive and looking for meals.

We think we're headed to even a more serious confrontation if the public does not believe that they have more of a share to pay and to contribute to maintaining the wildlife. The farmer is not afraid -- the farmers and ranchers are not afraid to carry their share, but as we believe some of our surveys indicate, that's gone well beyond their share.

And finally we appreciate this opportunity to express this concern and interest in this area, to focus the public dialogue on the issue. We hope that we can come up with a solution that's reasonable and more equitably shares the cost of these types of problems.

So thank you Senator. If there's any questions I'd be happy to try and answer them.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, Mr. Fagan, I appreciate very much the survey data, and I think the magnitude of the problem is certainly emphasized by the response you got to

your survey. A lot of times ag producers don't seem to want to spend much time filling out surveys or paying attention. But I think you've emphasized the magnitude of the problem, and again, a purpose of our hearing. But we need to continue to discuss this. I really agree with you, as I mentioned earlier, with such things as the Carrizo Plain has been put together there, and what will eventually happen with Dye (?) Creek. It's really going to put a premium on some cooperation in management. We may have some questions as the hearing progresses.

I want everyone to know that we do have most all entities of government represented here. The U.S.D.A. has two representatives that may be willing to answer questions, too, if we have any.

MR. FAGAN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Merlin, thank you so very much.

Our next witness is Mr. Brian Hunter. Brian is the Regional Manager of the Department of Fish and Game. Over my tenure in the Senate for nine years, I'm often very critical of this department. But I can tell you that in the people like Brian Hunter, they are sincere, they are dedicated, they are responsive and willing to work with us. And Brian, I thank you very much for being here with us today.

MR. BRIAN HUNTER: Thank you, Senator. It's a pleasure to be here. I'll think I'll speak from here because I think the people there can hear a little better if I can face them too, if that's okay?

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Very definitely. I might note to those of you who choose though to be up here before the speakers, try to speak to that larger mike. That one is the one that projects more.

MR. HUNTER: Okay. It's a pleasure to be here as a representative of Fish and Game. Our charge is to manage fish and wildlife in the state, or to look out for their best interests. At the same time the Legislature has charged us with dealing with depredation. Depredation is a rather interesting permit process, in that I'm sure the agriculturalists don't like it, the preservationist people don't like it, and the sportsmen of California don't like it. Fish and Game doesn't particularly like it. The thing about it is, there's nothing any better \_\_\_\_\_ been able to figure out to do.

I think what I need to do is go through first and explain a little bit what Fish and Game's role in the depredation process is. First of all, there are two sets of laws that direct our activities in dealing with depredation. The first one is legislative law and the two bills that the Senator spoke of -- if one is apparently not going to pass, one may -- is yet still in the process. Those laws will end up in our Fish and Game Code and direct us how to deal with depredation losses. There are a series of losses there now

that deal with deer, elk, bear, lions, pigs, gray squirrels, beavers. I think that's about it. Antelope and waterfowl and coyotes I didn't mention because we don't have a way to deal with those. We have no authority to manage coyotes. Nothing in the Fish and Game Code has us dealing with them. That is Mr. Ron Thompson and the Federal Department of Agriculture's responsibility. It was the Fish and Wildlife's service until they changed about what? two years ago?

Antelope, although they do cause depredation in Lassen and Modoc Counties in alfalfa fields, there has been no provision in the Legislature for issuing permits for antelope. We have dealt with some depredation problems mainly by taking the antelope out in a large capture effort as recently as this past February where we captured 257 antelope and took them to San Luis Obispo County and to Monterey County, and this is the Carrizo Plain that the Senator has spoken of.

The animals that we do deal with: deer, elk, bears, mountain lions, are dealt with on a fairly common -- well, I should address waterfowl. The reason we don't address waterfowl to any great extent is because they are migratory birds and thereby come under the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. And we can make recommendations. We can go out and see what's going on and work with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Our biggest involvement with waterfowl depredation would occur in this area where we meet with rice farmers every year when we talk about when the duck season will start. Even though there's a federal framework for starting the duck season, the California Department of Fish and Game or the Fish and Game Commission can pick where within that frame we start the season and when we open our lands to hunting. And we have delayed the opening of our refuges a week or two weeks depending on that particular year's rice harvest to try and keep the ducks on our land and not on private rice land.

The deer depredation system is pretty much straightforward. The laws that direct us say the Department shall go out and investigate upon receiving a complaint, and upon verification of damage shall issue a depredation permit. That's the simple words of the law, when in fact what we do is -- remember, our department is the steward for wildlife in the state, so it's not in our best interest to go out and issue a carte blanche permit to take all the animals in a whole area, not that we're often asked for that, but occasionally we are.

So we try and work out with the landowner some way to help them relieve the problem. We look at responding to depredation as not a request to kill whatever animals it is, but really as a request to prevent the damage to the crop that is occurring, whether it be livestock or an agricultural product. Part of this might involve some recommendations to prevent the deer from getting into the crop. Sometimes in the cities -- down there the Senator talked about this not being solely a rural problem, it's not -- in such places as

the Bay Area counties where the urban sprawl has put it out in the hills, there are people just as upset about some rose bushes as an alfalfa farmer whose alfalfa is being eaten and crushed by the wildlife. We'll make recommendations of fencing and/or harassment. All kinds of things are considered in trying to relieve the depredation problem but save the animals.

In a year like this, it's going to be a bad depredation year. Last year was a bad depredation year because most of the wildlife species required green feed whether it be grazing or browse, and as you well know it's going to be awful precious come June, July and August of this year. There's going to be very little green leaf.

Elk depredation. There are three species of elk in California, in the arms of Shasta and a little bit in southern Monterey County there's the Rocky Mountain elk. They cause some problems, not too much. In the drought of '76-'77 on the south side of Shasta up in the Burney country, there were some alfalfa fields that were pretty well hit by the Rocky Mountains. The Roosevelt elk of the northwest coast of California caused some problems, but there's a lot of public land in there, park land, federal park land. They caused some problems with the timber industry, but not too much.

The elk that causes the problems for the people of California is the Tule elk. That's the one that was referred to, by Merlin Fagan, in Mendocino County. And I think I need to give you a little bit of something special on this. I've been working for Fish and Game a long time, and I was involved in the transport of these animals. And it all started in about 1970 when we had a herd of 300-350 of these in the Owens Valley; and the Cache Creek herd -- the one that's causing the problems in western Colusa County -- was existing at that time and was from a plan of relocation of some elk from Monterey County to Yolo County in 1922. So they've been there for a long time.

But in 1970, we were basically stopped from conducting a hunting program on these animals in the Owens Valley. There was both state and federal legislation that was the result of a group of people called the Society for the Preservation of Tule Elk. These people said we were doing the wrong thing by shooting these animals because there were only 300-and-something animals of this particular race. They said you cannot shoot any more until you get to have 2000. We have had a hard time getting the 2000, and those of you that live west of I-5 in somewhere from Mendocino down through San Luis Obispo or know of people there, that is all basically Tule elk range now including the eastern parts of the Bay Area; in Contra Costa County there are several herds, too.

What I learned about these Tule elk a long time ago was that you don't treat them with logic. Because of this special status required by these preservationists, the depredation as it applies to the Tule elk doesn't really count. It always said, the Department shall issue depredation permits, which means, for kill. But since 1970 we

haven't done that on Tule elk. On one hand we were being told to do everything we can to increase the numbers, so we figured that we better do whatever we can, not to kill any of them. So at times we went into relocation efforts to help solve depredation problems, or quite honestly we did a bureaucratic shuffle. We couldn't do much else. There are a couple of cattlemen in this state that have just cause to be upset with this, but we were between a rock and a hard spot dealing with a very politically sensitive issue that would quickly get to the Governor's level if we mismanaged the elk. And we did the best we could. And I apologize to some particular cattlemen on whose land these things were causing interminable problems.

We have done some creative things to try and solve the Tule elk problems. We're in the process -- we're at the end of this process of building the numbers. Today in southern California, the Fish and Game Commission will probably, with any luck, pass the first hunting season on Tule elk since the early '70s. There's not much opposition to it. The preservationists are backing off because we've done a good job of building those numbers. What that means as far as depredation is, is that we will take a different stand on it. We also think that if public hunting can occur, starting now, that that's going to change the distribution of these animals and also the way the landowners look at those animals.

In the Mendocino area, in Potter Valley specifically, there are three ranches that are involved in this. And they have damage. The actual numbers of their losses, we are unable to estimate that, and the estimates that Merlin gave appear reasonable. The guy that did this is -- that made the estimates -- he's pretty precise. He did pretty good work. They're at least in the ballpark, so that there are definitely losses and we don't argue at all that they occur. What we have done there is encouraged one of the ranchers to enter this Private Lands Management Program whereby he can control hunters or he can have a hunting program that doesn't have to go through a statewide drawing process and hunt these particular animals. That hasn't been presented to the Commission, but that plan has been prepared and will be going to the Commission probably in May. What he will do as a result of that, he has an option of selling trespass rights for those animals. And because they are a highly desired animal, can make a fair amount of money. And what he has done is taken leases on those adjoining ranches for the hunting rights with the promise that if he gets into this program he is going to pay them. And the man that turned in the loss figures is going to get a good chunk of money back from a hunting program.

And the point of the long story there is that, I think, that if you look at some of these wildlife in cases, as an asset rather than a liability, you may have a different perspective on what can be done. People will pay to hunt. If you don't want to manage

hunters, there's a way you could hire somebody to manage the hunting program and take advantage of the wildlife that is there. I think that's an important aspect of this private lands management act that was passed by the Legislature because it gives the Department of Fish and Game a way to work with landowners to build in it incentives to have wildlife on the lands.

The bears. The bear depredation that was here, and again we addressed that pretty much straightforward. There's been a lot of concern about bears. The preservationists see all bears as Yogi and friendly, and bears have enamored themselves to the city dwelling public. There's a story on the radio this morning that we were involved in yesterday with a bear in Cloverdale was under the mayor's house. And everybody thinks this is great, you know, and everybody laughs. Bears are kind of comical and they've endeared themselves to the public, and at the same time there's a significant commercial wildlife utilization of bears for their gall bladders and paws that you may have read that we have done some undercover work and arresting these people.

So there was some concern about the overall populations of bears in the state. We think we're getting it somewhat stabilized. Some of you who are beekeepers will probably say that the bear population is better now than it was ten years ago. It may be. We try not to relocate bears because it's moving a problem bear from one area to another. And I say try, because we do occasionally do that. We don't do it in deer at all. And we have reasons that we can articulate as to why the moving of any number of deer is not going to solve the depredation problem. But occasionally, in a tough year, we will move a few bears to areas that we work with the forest service or -- generally, the forest service -- and ask them where we might be able to put these that they wouldn't cause additional problems. But bears are -- permits are issued for the taking of bear for molestation of houses, cabins and hives.

Mountain lions, again, mountain lions is a very popular subject with most of the people of California. Today at that commission meeting in southern California, also on the agenda is whether or not we're going to have a mountain lion season. One year ago this same commission passed the season for 190 permits. That season never took place even though the commission passed it because of a lawsuit which was before a San Francisco judge -- Superior Court judge -- and she said we had failed to address the environmental impact process in passing that regulation adequately enough to assure that the lion population would not be hurt.

Again, lions are a highly emotionally thing with people. I'm not certain why, whether it's a transference of love from a house cat to a big cat. They are a majestic animal, no doubt about it. The Department of Fish and Game agrees with the Cattlemen's Association, the Woolgrowers Association, the Farm Bureau that we've got more lions now



than any time that any of us have ever seen ...

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... every time I go out and talk with agriculturists I find people that have seen lions in areas that they have been in for a long time -- that the people have been in for a long time and never before seen a lion.

The lion regulations were modified for us by the Legislature in 1972, and we could not hunt them. So I guess I should even go back further. From 1907 to 1961-or-2, there was a bounty on lions. Every time one showed up somebody could take it. In 1962, they were declared a game animal. At the same time, the state had six trappers and lion hunters. We've deleted those six people and redirected their efforts to something else. From '62 to '72, it went through a period where a hunting license was required to take a lion. The regulations became more and more restricted until the last year there were only 50 permits, and the people that got a lion had to call in as soon as they got one, and when they reached 50 we were going to close the season. Legislation stopped us from hunting for 5 years and directed us to do research on lions. We did. Five years later, after that, we asked for another 5 year resolution because the preservationists were presenting evidence that said, we didn't know what we were doing and we were wrong. And it caused enough doubt that we just went for a second 5 year moratorium. Then there was still some doubt and confusion and arguing. There was another 3 year moratorium on hunting. Then in '76, more legislation which was passed by the Legislature, vetoed by the Governor with the message that the lions should be managed as any other game animal. And in 1977 a season was passed, and that's what I said was deleted.

At the same time all this was going on, we've always been able to issue mountain lion depredation permits. However, for a time they were more strict than they are now. Since 1976, it has loosened up somewhat. Having addressed the Cattlemen and Wool Growers, I know that many mountain lion depredations are never reported, which is a disservice to Fish and Game and to yourselves. And I have pled with the various organizations to tell us what's happening. We'll work with you in covering the mountain lion that kills. Right now the way it is, if a landowner sees a mountain lion that's threatening his stock, he can kill it, whether it's a horse or sheep or goats or whatever. If he calls us within 24 hours, we'll send a warden out and investigate the situation, and they're covered. But still, I think that many people do not report the depredation.

In the early years of this moratorium in our studies, the mountain lion preservationists were on our case - what do you mean there's a problem? Statewide you've got 10 or 15 mountain lion depredations reported. And that's what we're dealing with. And now it's up in the 50's and 60's. Some of them may involve 20 animals. There are cases where mountain lions have gone out, maybe a couple of young toms, and they'll kill

20 sheep in a night in one spot. We've seen several instances of that. Mountain lion populations are high enough now that if a lion is taken for killing sheep in a certain pasture that -- a mountain lion needs so much living space and they're feeling some of the same pressures that people in the cities do in that they're being crowded -- so that if you take one lion out another one'll come in. And I know of two different areas in California, one near Placerville and one in Mendocino County, where six lions were killed in a pen in a year's time. The animal comes in to get goats or sheep, he's killed. Everything's fine, and a couple of weeks later another mountain lion's there. Those mountain lions aren't living that close to that pen, but with their identification to territories it doesn't take long for another to move in.

So the Department of Fish and Game clearly recognizes that there is mountain lion depredation, that it's far under-reported, and we would like to see it all reported. It would help us in establishing a hunting season. That hunting season that's up for consideration today will not effect mountain lion population. It's such a minor kind that it's not deep enough to alleviate the problems for which we're concerned. If it were passed and we got it through the judicial system it would be a step toward increasing the take, that we might be able to set it up to alleviate depredation problems.

We came up with a concept, not very earthshaking, that we should set up mountain lions zones, somewhat like the deer zones, and make them coincide with the areas of heaviest mountain lion depredation; and concentrate the number of permits issued for mountain lions for hunting to be in areas where depredation is the greatest. Makes a great deal of sense to us and to probably yourselves. But we've been unable to get this through. Maybe we can do it. And I would like to say that the Wool Growers and the Cattlemen and the Farm Bureau have been very supportive of our efforts in the mountain lion hunt pursuit, I guess we should say. But at the same time there might be some agriculturally-based legislators, such as Senator Nielsen, who are willing to help us. There are others, last year at the Commission meeting, Assemblyman Bates from Oakland, he let in 60 kids about this big. Each one of those little kids got up and talked about how neat the mountain lions were. That's what we're fighting \_\_\_\_\_.

Pigs. Pigs in the early '80s have caused more problems than before that. We had a series of pretty wet years and pig populations really came up. And I think you've seen the end of that temporarily. Last year's dry spring and this year's dry spring, our wild pig populations are going down. The best we can tell reproduction is way down. There are still some good sized adults out there. For those of us who have been out pig hunting, our success this year is a whole lot less than last year. And this spring and summer is going to knock that population down.

In our Bay Area counties there is all kinds of concern. There are a lot of people down there that -- it's interesting, a lot of these preservationists type, the Native Plant Society and the people that support the parks -- that are against the hunting of anything else want you to murder pigs. They look at them as exotics, not the way that -- the state lists them as a state game mammal, but they look at them as exotics. And these people that are fighting us on many other issues are very supportive of getting anything that can be done to eliminate pigs. And then I end up taking the reverse because there are also a lot of people that want to hunt pigs. They are a valuable economic resource, although they are disruptive to whatever lands they are on.

There's a special part of the law that addresses pigs. The bag limit for the state on pigs is one a day, with an area of our own in Tehama County that's set up a little differently because there are pigs in Tehama County, but there's a lot of hunting activity. We desire to maintain the hunting activity, so there's a season in that area that is not year-round. The rest of the state is year-round and one day.

If the landowner is having a problem there are a couple of ways that one can increase the amount of pigs taken on land. One is to join this contract with the Department in a private wildlife management thing, like the one I'm talking to you about the elk. And in that case you'd have to do something to enhance the pig population. But at the same time you would be in a position to sell pig hunting. And a pig hunt with a reasonable chance of success is worth about \$400. If it's a big pig you can get about \$600 for it.

There is another option that you don't have to do that and you can have hunters come in and shoot two pigs a day if we issue you a special depredation tag called a Damage Relief Tag for pigs.

And yet there's another option that you can apply for a depredation permit and shoot pigs.

I guess I should make a mention that one of the things that landowners don't like about depredation laws is that the carcass must be cared for. Those carcasses that are commonly considered edible have to be cared for: gutted, skinned, and delivered to some agreed upon spot. Beavers don't have to be skinned. Bears are questionable. And lions have to be turned in as a whole carcass. And gray squirrels, I don't suppose anybody here is interested in gray squirrel depredation, but it occurs. We get incidental things: wild turkeys causing depredation, which we don't allow the killing of, but we try to work something out; gray squirrels, we can issue kill permits. Then a variety of other depredating animals that we have no concern about which are coyotes, ground squirrels, rats, mice, porcupines. Those can be taken at the owners wishes.

The reimbursement concept that was mentioned here today and the going to the State Border Control, to my knowledge California hasn't paid any depredation claims. There have been some made. There's been a lot of talk about it and more recently primarily

because of the elk, and because of our involvement in moving those elk, people look at us as being more responsible for the losses they're incurring rather than -- deer cause losses that -- the deer are always there. And they look at the Tule elk as not having always been there, except where we put them is in what was original elk range. However, those elk disappeared in the 1860s, between 1850 and 1860. Elk, by the way, is another -- is a modern word for trouble. Elk are neat animals, but they are troublesome.

We, in dealing with this legislation, are asked to review the legislation. And we have opposed the -- taken a position of oppose on the first Statham bill. And the reason for that is because of the money. We're willing to administer or help verify payment for wildlife damage if some fund source other than that of hunting and fishing licenses can be found. Our hunting and fishing license income is about \$60 million a year, and law requires us to spend that for activities that directly protect hunting and fishing. That's all the licenses we sell: commercial, sport and the rest of them.

The estimates of wildlife losses, I don't know what they are. I've seen estimates for California as high as \$200 million. The first bill, the Statham bill, had \$2 million in it, I believe when it started. What was it?

MR. FAGAN: It didn't have a \_\_\_\_\_ specified amount. Your department said the cost would be between \$20 and \$200 million dollars.

MR. HUNTER: It's big buck. It's bigger than we would get from our licenses activities. We're not opposed to that. Our role, as I see it, if that were to come about would be the same as it is now, to go out and assess damage to see that it occurred and verify that it occurred. But we would need the Department of Food and Agriculture to go out and make an estimate of what that damage was worth, because that's not within the realm of Fish and Game expertise.

I think that's the end of that. If there's any questions, I'll be here.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Okay. Brian, thank you very much for a very scholarly, I guess, dissertation really on, and frankly historic, and I do appreciate your cooperation and help.

We are going to need to move along expeditiously today because we do have to vacate the room by noon. And we had hoped to take maybe a brief five minute break around 10:30.

I think what Brian is really emphasizing is the premium on this kind of communication and understanding the nature of the problem, and then the cooperation toward some resolution. The issues do tend to get very emotional. Director Bontadelli was intending to be here, but the Fish and Game Commission hearing has required his attentions there.

I would like to next introduce Mr. Lew Davis. He's the Principal State Biologist with the Department Food and Agriculture, for some comments. Lew?

MR. LEWIS R. DAVIS: Good morning, Senator, staff, other people in the audience.

I'll try to make mine brief. I could reiterate some of the things that Brian and also our good member from the Farm Bureau has put forth. I'll try not to be repetitious on it.

You've asked for the Department's perspective as to the nature and degree of wildlife depredation problems. You also would like to know what our current program is and what might be possible solutions. I'll try to touch on those.

We do recognize that Animal Damage Control is increasingly recognized as an important and necessary phase of environmental preservation, and natural resource management. Like other wildlife management tools, such as habitat improvement and harvest of game species by hunting, control of certain animal populations is necessary to confine their harmful effects upon agricultural production, other desirable wildlife, and natural resources and public health to a tolerable level. In addition to selective population reduction, controls should include local environmental manipulation, the use of cultural methods unfavorable to the damaging species, such as frightening devices, chemical repellents, fencing and other mechanical barriers. We need to take these into consideration.

The containment of agricultural depredations by wild and domestic animals within tolerable economic limits is vital to the California ranchers and farmers, and to the state's agribusiness industry. Predators in 1987 were approximately -- responsible for losses in -- more than \$5 million, and this was through agriculture production. This is figured by confirmed losses and taking an indicator to come up with those figures. Without an effective control efforts applied by professionally trained and supervised animal control specialists, annual losses could go as high as eight times more than that. Sheep, goats, turkeys, and chickens are especially vulnerable to maiming and killing by predators. Calves, pigs, ducks, geese, rabbits and others also fall in there -- and certain crops have been brought out -- do sustain damage. It is significant that most of this multimillion dollar loss occurs in areas of industry which can least afford it--the range livestock producer who, generally, is already in severe economic crisis.

Animal damage control for agricultural protection is almost inseparable from that conducted for public health protection. The same animal species often are involved in both functions, although the primary target species may vary in local circumstances. The control program rationale does differ, however, in that agricultural depredation control is usually for selective removal of the individual pest animal responsible for that damage.

Each function requires detailed knowledge of animal behavior and application of appropriate control techniques. It can be best achieved by technically trained personnel, and we do advocate this. A uniform coordinated program as provided by the present cooperative arrangement is necessary and it does provide flexibility and economic

operation in handling these related animal damage problems involving predators and diseases which do not recognize state, county or other boundaries.

Our present program that we are engaged with is directed toward the reduction of animal damage to California's agriculture and to suppression of wildlife-borne diseases, such as rabies and is managed by the USDA Animal Damage Control Program, and involves nearly 75 person years. The USDA expends approximately \$3 million of which \$670 some thousand comes from the CDFA General Fund monies. This is an integrated program, carried out in cooperation with the county ag (sic) Departments of Food and Ag, the Health Services and 40 participating counties under a policy that recognizes the intrinsic value of all wildlife species, and the need to manage wildlife for the benefit of all people. The policy also embodies a philosophy for managing wildlife depredations in a responsible manner with consideration for the relative importance of the total environment.

Even with this program, the Department is well aware of the increased losses due to the depredating wild animals and free-roaming dogs. Some of the causes for this increase include some of the following factors; and you, Senator, have brought out most of these. But I would like to emphasize though, that:

1. Last year saw one of the worst fire years in the state's history. This has caused wildlife to seek shelter and food in other habitats, mainly urban and suburban environments.
2. We have seen habitat lost to housing, industrial, and agricultural developments which have led to similar situations for wildlife.
3. Endangered species programs have caused modifications of some of the control techniques that have been used for many years. County and city ordinances have also had control methods that have either modified or rescinded some of our methods completely.
4. The public's use pattern of the land is changing, more wilderness areas, refuges for wildlife and additional protection of some species have all led to higher numbers of many of the predators that cause damage to the producers of our farm commodities.
5. Loss of certain chemical controls through the re-registration process has hindered the ability to control some of these species also.

As to possible solutions to reducing the increased losses, the Department continues to research for new control methods and encourage the producers to use alternate methods when they become available. The Department's registration section is continuing to evaluate and review data that may lead to the re-registration of some of the toxicants that have been lost in the past.

From a legislative view, the Department has supported the sport hunting of mountain lions as well as supporting the repeal of the moratorium.

I'll close here, but let me bring one item here that may shed some light on the



overall problems in what we're faced with. During the last 88 years, the agriculture producing population of the United States has gone from more than 80 percent of the population to less than four percent today, and they are producing a surplus of food. The animals, which traditionally have been the target of vertebrate pest control, are now being considered by many as aesthetic animals by the present urban segment of the population. With this trend, coupled with human population growth, declining populations of wildlife, toxic pollutions factors, and the overall concern for the environment, the Department's job and the producers job of reducing the damage caused by predators is going to continue to be more difficult and will demand changes of husbandry practices, and the pest control tools that we use.

I thank you for being able to appear, and I will be around for any questions that you may have later on.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Lew, thank you very much for your continued assistance. It's always a pleasure working with you and working with the Department. And I am very pleased to see the Department taking such a high interest in this problem and working with Brian Hunter and the Department of Fish and Game. I do know that there is a tremendous amount of cooperation, and at that this particular moment in history we are especially blessed that the current director of the Department of Food and Agriculture is the immediate past director of the Department of Fish and Game. That helps a little bit. We thank you.

I want to acknowledge also something very special to me, the presence in the room where I now see a couple of 4-H'ers. I don't know what you're raising out there, but I'm very pleased to see some students participating in government and getting some understanding.

And maybe at this point I might note an historic and somewhat emotional aside for me that doesn't have anything to do with the hearing, but I noticed coming into the room is Greg O'Sullivan. He is a woolgrower out of Colusa County. His dad is former State Senate Virgil O'Sullivan. And yesterday we had a Memorial in the State Senate for former Senator Walter Stiern, a veterinarian and a very, very good friend of mine, and we were eulogizing Walter. In fact, he, having been probably the only veterinarian in the history of the California State Senate, often commented about wild burros and Tule elk, and he was one of our experts in that regard. But yesterday former Senators were also invited to attend the session for eulogizing Walter Stiern. And I made note in my comments about Walter, that it was an historic day because two Senators from Colusa County were seated on the Floor of the State Senate this day, Virgil O'Sullivan and Jim Nielsen. That probably is rather rare. I don't know that that's ever happened before for a county like Colusa to have two Senators present in the Chambers at once.

With that aside, I would like to introduce Mr. John Ross, the Executive Vice President of the California Cattlemen's Association. And I know that John had a very constructive and extensive role in the Carrizo Plain ideas, as he has with Dye Creek and many, many others. The California Cattlemen's Association has been extensively involved in this issue and of the most effected by it. Mr. Ross.

MR. JOHN W. ROSS: Thank you, Senator Nielsen. I'm here on behalf of the California Cattlemen's Association, and would like to start by thanking you for holding this hearing. We have some very significant concerns and some very significant losses as a result of wildlife depredation.

You know, as ranchers, we face an untenable dilemma in many cases. We are restricted or prohibited from controlling or managing the livestock on our property. And further we must bear the cost of mitigation. Sometimes we are required to bear that cost. Sometimes it's a natural cost of doing business. We're required to bear the cost for providing habitat. And further, we're required to suffer the damages and bear the cost of those damages caused by the wildlife of the state.

I might note that one of the frustrations we have is that we're often forced to mitigate for wildlife in a manner that's incompatible with our overall ranching operation, and effectively adversely effects our overall ranching operation. This occurs even when there are alternatives available that could be made compatible with our need to earn a livelihood on our ranches. But some of the wildlife professionals -- and I guess I'd say most of the self-proclaimed wildlife professionals -- actively resist a cooperative effort with the landowners. Now I might note that we do have a good working relationship, we think, and an improving working relationship with the State Department of Fish and Game. But the wildlife professionals I speak of are often in the organizations that are focused on a single species or a single issue within the wildlife question.

Now others have testified as to the extent of the losses. I won't spend a lot of time on the extent of the losses except to say that we suffer losses to such predators as coyotes, bears and mountain lion. And we also suffer the damage losses to Tule elk, wild pigs and beaver. We estimate, based on the Animal Damage Control Program, that our losses in the state are at least \$50 million for livestock depredation alone. That's loss of livestock alone. And does not necessarily get into property damage. The property damage total could take it much higher.

In the aggregate, given the total receipts of California agriculture, that may not seem like very much. In fact, it's probably 1 percent or less of total agricultural receipts in California. But it's still a significant sum, and it's particularly significant to the individual who has to suffer the loss. We've had a case here recently where the landowner lost five calves to coyotes. In terms of his expected income this

year, that's probably about 20 percent of the return he was expecting from his operation. And that 20 percent is pretty significant. That's the equivalent of someone not being paid for two months work out of a 12 month year.

What we see is actually a large problem that goes beyond just a question of the extent of the economic losses, but a large problem with the overall management and the need to coexist with wildlife here in the state.

I'd like to focus on some of the programs that are in place that we think are important. And on some of the possible alternatives that we might want to consider. I'd like to second Mr. Hunter's comments on the depredation program. That's a very significant and critical need for us. Without the depredation program, we would suffer significantly greater losses. The problem is the depredation program kicks in after the first loss has occurred. So we're really only preventing subsequent losses. We need to look at broader management techniques.

And in that respect I'd like to comment on the overall Department of Fish and Game management, and recognize that they are constrained under the law to manage expressly for wildlife and fisheries. In some cases that has essentially led them to place rather severe restrictions on property owners and on how we manage our property. And frequently we encounter situations where they're not willing to consider the needs of the landowner.

We have some ideas on how to address that. One is when the initial regulation is promulgated before the Fish and Game Commission, we would like to see an economic impact analysis of the effect of the regulation upon landowners.

A second idea where regulation prevents some activity or some alternative use for our property, we'd like to see consideration given for compensation for the economic loss of alternatives.

Another idea that would help, and I've noted this to Director Bontadelli, would help us for the Department and the Fish and Game Commission to form a property owners advisory committee. In fact, the private property owners in the state provide a significant proportion, even though private property is less than half of the total land in the state, it's probably closer to 70 percent of the quality wildlife habitat here in the state. And while the Department and the Commission are open to meeting with private property owners, there is no formal mechanism for private property owners to communicate their concerns and to provide comments as ideas come up. Perhaps a private property owners advisory committee would be helpful.

Again, I would like to note that both under the past director of Fish and Game, and the current director, Mr. Pete Bontadelli, we do have a good working relationship, improving working relationship with Fish and Game, and that they have expressed or acknowledged our concerns.

Now a few other areas that we are concerned with, and again I'm speaking of an entire package of alternatives to address the problem. One is, we need to see increased funding for the cooperative Federal-State-Local Animal Damage Control program. That cooperative program originally was intended that the state, the counties and the federal government would each share 1/3 of the cost of the program. Well, the state share is now down to just less than 24 percent. The state is ...

(End of Side 3 -- no overlap to Side 4)

... that we find a useful tool is the private lands management area program. Mr. Hunter spoke very well of that program. We are encouraged by what we see. That is the only state program that provides a direct return to landowners for additional work that they may do to enhance wildlife habitat and to enhance the wildlife return from the property above and beyond what might normally be there. And again, I'll come back to that point later because we think it can be extended to other areas.

We are concerned that the Department of Fish and Game is not able to fully utilize one of its wildlife management strategies, and that is hunting where it is made by the attempts to prevent hunting of mountain lions. Again, I'm not here to advocate hunting as a control method. It is just one of the tools that's available. We don't have the expertise to determine when hunting should be allowed, but the Department of Fish and Game does. And when they direct that a hunt should be provided, we support that intent, and particularly in the case of mountain lions.

Now a couple of other ideas that have come forth. One, I'd concur with Mr. Fagan's comments on compensation for losses. We supported the pieces of legislation that he noted. And we are supportive of the idea of compensation for losses.

We acknowledge and hope to help Mr. Fagan come up with the sources of funds. And Mr. Hunter pointed out as a significant problem with those pieces of legislation.

An area which we think has a lot of potential is the idea of conservation easements or cooperative agreements for wildlife management. The ranchers are willing to manage for wildlife, but you have to recognize -- and we know you do, Senator Nielsen -- you have to recognize we're out there to earn a living as well. Any strategy, any practice, any regulation that restricts our ability to earn a living may effect whether or not we're able to continue in operation. We'd be willing in many cases to enter into contracts where the income from the contract would offset the loss of income from our primary occupation out there, raising cattle, if those contracts were available. We'd enter into those contracts for wildlife habitat improvement.

Now in several of the areas that I've talked about we have some significant concerns. And there's one key factor that may prohibit any of those areas from really being utilized -- any of those ideas from being utilized -- and that's the question of landowner liability. We've supported, we've attempted changes in landowner liability to

limit our liability, particularly where we're providing recreational opportunities, on either a fee or non-fee basis to no avail in the State Legislature. We know you understand the problem, and we appreciate the support you've given us on trying to address that problem. We even face liability when state employees enter the property in the conduct of their business. And we don't really have limitations on that liability, let alone the public liability that we face.

You had mentioned the Carrizo Plain. There are a set of issues that concern us over acquisition and management of land for wildlife recreation and other public uses. Essentially, the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Federal Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service have all acknowledged that they really lack adequate staff to manage the property under their disposal now. The Department of Fish and Game at one point felt that they were short as many as 40 people to manage the 400,000 acres under their purview. The Department of Parks and Recreation has general plans on less than 20 percent of the parks, which means that the other 80 percent are unavailable for use.

Now, why are we concerned with that? Well, just as when one of our neighbors fails to manage their property effectively, that effects our ability to manage our property. Well, we find that the state, local governments, and the federal government, when they are not able to manage their property, don't make for particularly good neighbors. That isn't to say that they're not doing a good job with the resources they have. They are. In fact I think several of the agencies are doing an outstanding job. But given constrained resources, we find it objectionable, and in many cases we're looking to acquire more land. The Carrizo Plain is an example, Dye Creek is an example. And then Proposition 70, which will be on the June ballot, which provides \$776 million, 90 percent of which is to be used for acquisition, not development, acquisition of new land.

We would certainly advocate a better neighbor policy with the state agencies and with the federal agencies that manage land. And support adequate funding for their budgets to manage that land effectively.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I will be available for questions or comments should there be any. We appreciate the hearing.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Thank you, John, very much. You've raised some good points. I commend the California Cattlemen's for being such a responsible organization and working in such a constructive way. And you do make a superb point about the collision course I think that we are upon as we are acquiring more lands for parks or wilderness or whatever you want to call it. It has set us on a collision course dealing with these very problems. It is the purpose of the hearing today. Particularly I'm concerned about the \$776 million bond measure, too, and the 90 percent that is for simple acquisition, and

our oft voiced complaint that we can't even manage what we've got. How do we do it and how do we exacerbate our problem that we're discussing in this hearing if we are going to acquire more such lands? And not only, I might note, for the control of predators, but just for the use of the public, as you note. Thank you, John, very much.

Mr. Leo LeGrande from Williams wanted to testify. He's signed up, but Leo's got to leave right away. Leo, why don't you come up and comment so you can get on about your business.

MR. LEO LeGRANDE: I've come forth today here at this public hearing, not so much in the capacity to complain about a situation, but rather to present a problem that I have no solution for.

Previously I've met with many representatives of this state, including Jim Methersmith (?), Bill Thorton, Robert Houts (?), Don Koch (?), Jim Goodman, your representative, Chris Chandler, Charlie Jensen, and Pat Perkins, concerning the elk herd located west of Highway 20 in Colusa County. And I'm going to present some information that we've put together over the last year and a half about the elk herd.

The Department of Fish and Game have 18 separate elk herds in the State of California. One of these herds is located west of Williams in the geographical areas known as the Cortina Range. For the most part, in the past years the elk have stayed west of Highway 16 in a suitable area where minimal damage was done to the lands they roamed on. The numbers were fewer as they were left undisturbed.

But since then, there has been a change in topography on the west side of the valley. Where once rolling hills were being grazed by cattle and sheep, they are now being irrigated with furrows and levees producing various vegetative crops. It has attracted the elk both by sight and smell to migrate into the valley.

Elk are grassland undulate animals that travel to find less vegetative growth. Since the herd has migrated into the valley, we have become concerned with the problems they have caused on our ranch.

We were able to tolerate their company when the numbers were small, but with such an increase in the herd's growth, we have found that is now jeopardizing our ranching livelihood. No longer can we operate and manage our ranch at 100 percent efficiency.

The elk herd problem first started in 1984 when they devoured our Sudan crop. Approximately 40 elk harvested the crop in 20 days. In 1985, approximately 65 elk summered and wintered on our grasslands. Over 2,000 feet of fence was destroyed that year. In the year 1986, we had counted from 100 to 200 elk on different given days, foraging on our grasslands. Destruction of over 200 feet of fence had occurred that year.

The losses that have occurred are not only in dollars, but also in the productivity



of the land.

It is easy to understand the dollars lost from the elk consuming the vegetative growth. But let me explain some of the other problems we are faced with:

1) Being management control. The elk have destroyed our boundary fences in certain places. During the month of December, 21 steer got out and crossed over Highway 20 in the early evening hours. One of them was hit and killed. Luckily no one was insured. This leaves the door wide open for any lawsuit if the situation occurs again with an injury or death to any motorists.

2) As a general practice we leave approximately 50 percent dry matter (feed) on our ranch for the following year. When the elk eat our dry feed during the summer months, we lose the ability to purchase our cattle at the desirable times. When the green grass starts growing, cattle can sometimes be worth 3 1/2 cents more a pound. On a 550 pound steer this would be costing us \$19.25 more per animal.

3) The inability to keep cattle in given pastures, losing the control to monitor our vegetative growth and pounds gain for animals.

4) Erosion. When elk travel in herds as they do, excessive damage occurs to the grounds they travel on. Vegetation stops growing as large bare trails are left unprotected.

5) Any dry land crop considered to be grown would almost inevitably be destroyed by the foraging animals.

6) Loss of vegetative growth for the current season lowers our stocking rate capacity.

7) And, of course, the dollars lost in the feed value they consume.

Tule elk are an indigenous animal that spends far less energy than imported beast in overcoming harsh environmental conditions such as disease, weather, scarcity of water and vegetation. Thus more energy is used for growth and reproduction. Tule elk are an amazingly tough species. They're hardy, disease resistant, and adaptable to extreme environmental conditions. In Colusa County there is no predator that preys off the elk. Therefore, their ecosystem is left undisturbed. With the high reproduction ability that they have, we've found them to be causing us more damage as each year passes.

We have spent much time and money in trying to detour the elk from our ranges. Some of the methods used include Zon guns, herding with dogs, herding with helicopter, electric fence around boundaries. All of these methods have failed. It has left us bewildered in curtailing our elk problems.

In 1971 the Senate passed a bill which prohibited the hunting of Tule elk. The "Behr Bill" forbade the hunting of Tule elk until their numbers reached 2,000. The bill also required Fish and Game to relocate surplus animals.

The Tule elk program is totally controlled by the State of California. It is their obligation to manage such herds without creating a hindrance or hazard to the lands they live on.

If the damages continue to increase at the rate they are going, it will seriously jeopardize our operating ability. Ranching is our livelihood. It pays our bills and puts food on our table. Our income is steadily decreasing due to the damages being created.

We definitely have a problem, but we don't have a definite answer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Leo, thank you very much, and I might note that Leo has delivered also a resolution from the Board of Supervisors of Colusa County. He and his family I know very well personally, and I know they are the most impacted in the entire state. Leo, it's taken a lot of work on your part to compile this data as you've continued to try to fight the problem. I can only say that I believe that your data is to be put to good use. That's one of the purposes of this hearing. And I must also note that part of the challenge is not just for everyone to come here and comment. I'm an action-oriented person and I'm going to have some suggestions, I think, for action upon conclusion of this hearing. But each of you need to go forth, just as Leo has, and speak long, loud, and hard to foster this cooperation in the spirit of management that is going to be so important to the resolution. Thank you, Leo, very much.

The next witness that will testify is Mr. Ed Romano. Ed is the representative of the California Agriculture Commissioners Association. I believe -- you're the President, Ed?

MR. ED ROMANO: Vice president.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Vice president. Mr. Ed Romano, California Ag Commissioners Association.

MR. ROMANO: Good morning, Senator Nielsen and members of the audience.

The California Agriculture Commissioners Association is interested in economic losses due to wildlife depredation. The Association has asked the director of Food and Agriculture to form a task force to evaluate animal damage and available control methods in the State. The task force would be supported by a technical advisory committee comprised of staff from CDFA, University of California, and members from the California Agriculture Commissioners Association. Also the Department of Fish and Game staff could be included.

It is our hope that the task force would develop long-range plans for control of animal damage. It would recommend research needed to better identify the ecology of problem animals in the urban and rural environment and their control.

We would welcome the support of the committee for such a task force. There is a need to develop a comprehensive long-term plan to control animal damage, not only in the rural communities, but also in the urban communities.

One of the things we've seen here this morning along the line is the Tule elk that were moved around the state to enhance their development. But no plan was put into action at the time they were moved to mitigate the damage they might cause. So we think that when things are done like that, that probably if we had a long-range plan that would say, if we're going to do this, how are we going to mitigate the damage they may cause? Either it would be an environmental impact when they were moved, so when they become a certain level that some control measures could be taken, might be a better approach than waiting until the problem arises, which it seems what we're doing now.

We must remember though, that there are other animals that cause damage besides mountain lions, bears, and coyotes and Tule elk which are the high profile animals. We also have damage caused by birds, squirrels and rats. Don't know if people care about rats. A lot of things that have happened recently even impact those programs. So we're hoping that if we develop a long-range program, we can have things in place that we need to also control those.

Without effective tools to control problem animals it would be impossible to economically produce crops or livestock in California. One of the things that we see happening in the Legislature now is that we have another bill introduced by Marks, SB 2620, which would outlaw steel jaw traps. If this bill were to pass it would take away one of the most selective tools we have for the control of coyotes. It would make that task almost impossible.

We also feel that there's an additional need for funding for the Animal Damage Control Program operated by the state so that other counties that are not contracted now with the state, with federal government who now runs the program, could get into the program. Also that additional funding would be helpful to the counties that are now present in the program. In fact here in Glenn County, we find that we've gone back in the program after being out of the program for a number of years. We were originally in it. Because of the budget crunch we had to get out. Now because of the impact on the west side, it's become impossible to continue the sheep industry without a program. We went back in the program. Then because of the restricted funding that the Fish and Wildlife are under, they're unable to provide the number of trappers that we need in the area. Additional funding might be helpful in getting the number of trappers that we need.

So these are some of the things. We also would -- it would seem feasible to us that some kind of program would be put in place where, if the population of California is going to benefit from wildlife, that there should be some way to mitigate the damage and possibly even reimburse the people who are suffering the damage that are providing the habitat for wildlife.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee for focusing attention on this

important problem and would offer our help in bringing about an acceptable solution.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Ed, thank you very much for your constructive thoughts in all of the work of an ag commissioner, in so many areas, including this one. Your job is not at all an easy one.

You are emphasizing a point that I see intertwined in all this, is that cooperative way that we're going to have to work together, particularly in terms of managing habitat.

I feel cause to comment regarding the steel trap issue, too. As a member of the Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee with nine years, I have been able to sit there and hear a lot of these bills and see the pictures of the coyotes that are in steel jaw traps, and the emotionalism that is tried to be evoked by those who want to outlaw the traps. To such extent, that being disturbed, I have gathered some pictures of my own of sheep and calves that have been consumed by these wonderful little beasts that seem to have their paw caught in the steel jaw trap.

My message is that there is another side to this issue. And not trying to be callous, but on occasion I also feel cause to wear one of my leather cattleman jackets. It has shoulders of calf skin. And my point in that is, that calves are killed by these animals, and it is a serious problem.

So, I thank you very much, Ed, for your constructive suggestion. The idea of the task force on animal damage control ties in with the Property Owners Advisory Committee that Mr. Ross is discussing, so I think that we're going to evolve a lot of good ideas as a product of this, again all in a cooperative spirit. I thank you very much for your testimony.

Ladies and gentlemen, we do have a lot of folks who do want to comment. We have had some that did not sign up early. I was anticipating a break around 10:30. I think what I'd like to do is just proceed with our testimony, understanding that if you want to get up and move around, please do that. Just go on to the back, and you know, we can shut the doors and we can continue the hearing. But I understand people sometimes wanting to get up and stretch. But I'm afraid if we take a break, it will take us 20 minutes to get back in here. And some folks who would like to comment are not going to have that occasion. So feel free to just get up and step out for a while, if that be your desire. You surely that will not bother me. And we will proceed.

Is Jay Dow here from the Lassen County Cattlemen's Association? Mr. Jay Dow.

MR. JAY DOW: Thank you, Senator. We appreciate this opportunity to speak. I'm going to limit my discussion this morning on crop-damaged rather than fether-damaged livestock, even though in Lassen County we certainly do have fether-damage on livestock.

Wildlife is obviously a very important resource. It's a very important part of the economic in Lassen County. Honey Lake Valley, in particular, is a very important

breeding, staging and feeding area for ducks, geese, swans, sandhill cranes, and numerous other bird species. It's also an important deer and antelope range both winter and summer.

The reason for crop depredation is very simple. Wildlife needs feed. Agricultural crops provide a readily available and abundant feed source.

Honey Lake Valley is a small isolated agricultural area. Farms and ranches are spread out and scattered. We don't have the concentrated agricultural areas like the Sacramento Valley. Since wildlife is so abundant there, wildlife depredation can be very intense. Wildlife can reduce yields on alfalfa hay, pastures, grain, and seed alfalfa. They can actually destroy complete stands at critical times, especially young alfalfa stands when the ground is wet.

Dollar values in losses due to wildlife can range up to \$400 to \$500 an acre in a worse case scenario. Some examples of losses that I'm intimately aware of, on my own operation, geese defoliate our alfalfa hay fields from the time it breaks dormancy in the spring until mid-April. I grow 500 acres of hay and these losses amount to an estimated \$40 an acre. That's \$20,000 in income loss per year just due to geese defoliation.

Other losses include actual stand destruction of young alfalfa, and this hurts us twofold. We have a relatively short growing season, so when the young alfalfa stand is lost due to wildlife depredation, we actually lose an entire growing season as well as having additional establishment cost the following year.

Deer and antelope also take their toll. The most vivid example is on seed alfalfa which is a crop increasingly growing in Honey Lake Valley. When the seed is ripe just prior to harvest, the deer and antelope love to go along and nip off the alfalfa seed that start at about \$1.15 a pound, so you can see how fast that adds up in dollar values.

The solutions we have now are relatively limited. We do have wildlife and we utilize Zon guns. However, this is very time-consuming and basically ineffective. The Private Lands Management Act is not applicable to all small farms. And I feel that depredation permits really are not addressing this problem properly. I think there's other solutions that are more applicable.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Jay, can I ask you on that point regarding the geese, and I think some folks maybe later will comment, too. But we have waterfowl area. Does that seem to help any?

MR. DOW: Having state areas? Let me continue on. I've got some solutions proposed here.

In Lassen County, we do have numerous wildlife species and lots of game, and we do have a lot of habitat now. What we're lacking is good feed sources. The Wildlife Conservation Board and Department of Fish and Game have been very good about purchasing

and protecting critical wildlife habitat in Lassen County, especially after fires and floods have destroyed previous habitat, and to prevent subdivision from interfering with migration routes.

It's important to point out, though, that often times they purchase this land and do not have proper funds to manage it. That was brought out earlier by John Ross.

In Lassen County, the Honey Lake wildlife area has begun to implement a relatively new program. Due to their reduced manpower and the inability of them to manage their existing lands to their potential, they've begun to contract for grain and alfalfa production on the state areas. They simply put this out to bid and local farmers and ranchers bid on this on a cash basis. Most of these funds in the past have ironically come from non-game sources, such as sandhill crane sources. They haven't been specifically for waterfowl or game animals. However, there's been heavy usage by waterfowl and game, as well as by sandhill cranes.

Producing crops on these state areas, which is similar to production on private lands, has been very effective in reducing depredation on nearby farms. I need to point out that these state areas that are existing need to produce crops that are very similar in production to commercially grown crops. Traditionally, the state areas have broached it very minimally. They've put in minimum efforts and got minimum results and minimum yields, and consequently the wildlife would either utilize what was there very rapidly and then move on to private lands, or go directly to the private lands. It's got to be attractive for wildlife to use it. And by going through this contract route, it has worked very well.

Some other ideas that haven't been implemented, but just things that I've thought about. It may be possible to contract with farmers to grow crops specifically for wildlife on their private land. Also, the idea of conservation easements or cooperative management agreements, that John Ross brought out, certainly may come into play. This approach would certainly be easier to monitor and administrate in a direct reimbursement for depredation, after the fact, in other words after the depredation occurs.

That's basically the point I wanted to cover this morning. And I think it's certainly worked well in the limited scale it's been tried in Lassen County. I think it should continue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Jay, you hit some very, very important points. I'm not really interested in after the fact stuff either. And you know, liability I'm very sensitive to, of course, and we have to address as an action issue. But compeer compensating a farmer or a livestock producer for the lost animals makes no sense to me as a means.

You have really hit upon a very important point though, and that is in essence the contracting the crop production good feed sources on the areas that we now have in



existence. It doesn't make a lot of sense with the waterfowl area if that is not an attractive area. If you call it a waterfowl area, they aren't going to go there anyway. So as a part of our action, a suggestion that's going to be identifying ways, as you have suggested constructively, that we can have the critters go there. And maybe in fact involve the private sector. I like the concept of cooperative management agreements, too. One of the places that I come from in this, is that government doesn't always do it best. And as part of our solution to this problem of cooperation between those who would rather preserve and those who want to produce, is let's have more of a partnership involving the private sector. And I think you very eloquently commented to that. I commend you for your efforts up there. I sure am committed to this whole issue of good feed sources. It's very important.

MR. DOW: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Jay, thank you so much.

We've got two who have signed up who have not gotten here yet. I believe Mr. Dick Mudd is here though. Dick, you're representing Wool Growers. Please come up.

MR. DICK MUDD: First of all, thank you Senator Nielsen, for this opportunity to speak before you. I'd like to say that I represent myself, the California Wool Growers Association, the Glenn/Colusa Wool Growers Association, and also the Glenn County Farm Bureau asked me to speak in their behalf.

I think, first of all, I'd like to start off with giving you some of my own experiences with wildlife on my own ranch and give you some sort of a picture as to what we face there. My ranch is 12 miles west of here out in the foothills. I'm a fourth generation on the ranch. We've been there since 1800s -- 1880, I believe it is. We have incurred losses throughout all these years. However, the last -- well, I don't know, several years especially, have become almost intolerable. In my own case, I normally carry an inventory of 500 ewes. Due to the -- the last two or three years, two years especially and this one coming up, it looks like we're going to have a drought condition again. My inventory has had to have been carried in a lesser number because of the feed conditions or feed availability. However, my predator losses have been at least on the same level or even more. This year, the '87 and '88 lambing season, which takes into account from October to right up to this present time, I've lost 40 lambs and 25 ewes. And that's in excess of \$9,000 loss.

Also, I noticed others this morning recognized these losses. I commend them. Mr. Fagan had some real good numbers from the Farm Bureau. Mr. Hunter recognizes many of these problems that we have. I think the Fish and Game Department knows the many things that need to be addressed. However, their hands are tied in many cases. I think that we are all in concert that we need to all work together on these sort of things.

The Wool Growers and the Cattlemen's Association in the state have been working very

closely together. Mr. Ross and Jay Wilson, our Executive Vice President in Sacramento work right together on these things, and I'm sure, Senator, they've visited you in the past. And we sure -- we commend you for your efforts on these in our behalf, also.

We also would like to support Senate Bill 2664 that creates a state liability for the losses caused by wildlife. Mr. Ross of the Cattlemen's Association mentioned that and we want to back that up also.

We also want to oppose any bill that would restrict our use of steel jaw traps because, as others have mentioned, particularly Mr. Romano, our Agriculture man here in the County, you know that just takes away one of the tools that's real selective in controlling the coyotes.

In our situation, back on the ranch again, I might say that the last three years is the only time in my life that I've ever witnessed lions in our area. Now, as others have said, the pressure from increased population is apparent as to why they are showing up.

One of the other things that's getting near to our area are bear. However, we haven't had any on my ranch yet that I know about. I think it's just a matter of time.

We also would like to ask that the increase in ADC funds be implemented. It's apparent that we can't control the predators with the level of protection that we have now through the Fish and Wildlife Service. They just simply need more men. We have one trapper to take care of this county, and that's obvious that that is almost an impossibility.

I welcome the chance to speak before this group. These hearings and studies that we've had in the past are, I think, a very fine form to get all of these things out before the professionals and also the public. I think the public needs to know these sort of things. But action must be put into course, and it needs to be done as fast as can be humanly possible because the ranchers can't afford to keep on sustaining these losses that we've been mentioning. I have spoken only for myself with these losses. I do happen to know others in the county who are here, and I hope that they present testimony today. They're incurring losses that are just simply going to put them out of business. We just can't stand that.

With that I will close, and I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak before you, and look forward to all the help we can give you in any way in the future.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Dick, your losses of about 40, I think you said. Are those all coyote?

MR. MUDD: Coyotes and lions.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Lions, too.

MR. MUDD: Most of the lambs were killed by the coyote. Probably six or eight lambs were killed by the coyote, and there was 23 ewes killed in a row with the lion in a short

period of time in mid-October to early November. And they were all pregnant ewes, as a matter of fact.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: That's pretty tough to sustain, and the wool market or the lamb market or the beef market can't support those kind of losses, that's for sure.

MR. MUDD: No, we can't Senator, and that's why I say that we -- again, we need to all work together and it has to be done -- what's the proper word? expeditiously.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: We're sure trying to and that's certainly a purpose of this hearing. Dick, thank you very much for testifying this morning.

MR. MUDD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Mr. Leland Davis with the Tehama County Farm Bureau.

MR. LELAND DAVIS: Senator, I appreciate the opportunity to come down and say a few words before this group. I not only represent the Tehama County Farm Bureau, I'm also a Director of the Tehama County Cattlemen's Association, and I'm the Beef Commodity Chairman for the CFBF in the State of California.

In July of last year, we had a joint meeting with the hog people in Sacramento, and it was brought to my attention at that time that there was a tremendous loss with the wild hogs in Mendocino County. There was a gentleman there with quite a sizeable sheep operation, and the aftermath of the wild hogs was he'd end up with four little feet.

Of course, I have a pet peeve, and it's been commented on and abused quite frequently today, and that's our mountain lion situation. The gentleman from Fish and Game gives some of the "for instances" that we can use to combat these animals. But the complaint that I have with it, it's too clumsy, it's too -- it's like he said, it was after the fact. To give an example, I have been in a position where I've sold most of my cattle and I take in leased cattle. I have a gentleman on the ranch right now that I take care of these cattle, and I know of 10 calves that's been killed by mountain lions. The only way you find these rascals is your dogs will find little bits of hair, or they'll find the remains of a carcass piled in a brush patch. And it's very difficult to go out in 10 days or a week after an animal has killed these creatures and try find them.

I know of two or three "for instances" where some people, in the Manton area specifically, had problems with mountain lions. One lady even had them come in her barn and get her lambs out of the barn. She called the Fish and Game, and 10 days after they killed all the lambs, well they gave them a permit. This comes back to a management in Fish and Game, and you have just the cooperation of the agent out in the field rather than the head of the thing. And they, I'm sure, are doing the best they can. But I feel that if they would pull some of the restrictions as far as killing these animals and give the rancher a little more freedom to eliminate them. Well, like he said a minute ago, if you have a loss, they have to come out and confirm it. Well, you confirm something after

the fact, and the animal can be 50 miles away at that time. It makes it pretty difficult to really bring any pressure to bear.

I could go on and on. There's a gentleman with me that will testify in a few minutes about the coyote loss in the sheep industry in the county, and it's quite sizeable.

I think maybe I've probably said as much as necessary for the two or three hats that I wear today, but I do appreciate the opportunity to come down and speak to you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, you did get to the point of management, at least in regards to the mountain lion. I've always argued management and not moratorium. That's sort of the spirit that we're trying to pursue here. I'm not a big one for after the fact stuff, either. That does cost, and you're not going to get the kind of reimbursement that you really would like. I'm hoping that we're going to be able to obtain some more ideas here. And maybe even more importantly, pull a lot of the existing ideas together with some concerted effort.

MR. DAVIS: One other comment about this mountain lion hunting perspective that they put through that they -- I think the original figure was 180 lions in the State of California. Then they went through -- if I'm not correct and I can be corrected. I've been known to make a whole bunch of mistakes in my life. But without the use of dogs, they're not going to kill any mountain lions.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: That's an issue unto itself and ...

MR. DAVIS: Correct.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: ... as you know, Dick (sic), amply debated in the Legislature. Well, the issue is far from resolved. As you know, in Long Beach there's a hearing going on with the Fish and Game Commission this very day. Though I was probably the most vicious opponent of extending the moratorium, I have to note that -- and though I am for the controlled management of the mountain lion, and hunting being a technique to do that, I don't think that's going to have an enormous impact on our problem. It's going to take one tiny step, but it's a tiny step at least we need to take. But it's part of the overall concept of managing.

Dick (sic), thank you so much for being here today.

Let's see, is Leland -- or Joe -- Joe Crowe. He is a cattleman from -- where you from? Whitmore. Joe.

MR. CROWE: Senator Nielsen? Are we going to have time for everybody to testify?

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: That's what I'm trying to move very expeditiously and not allow a break, and everything else.

MR. CROWE: Otherwise, I was going to relinquish my time to another fellow \_\_\_\_\_.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: No, sir. We're trying to be very expeditious here ...

MR. CROWE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: ... because I want everybody to have their opportunity to comment. Leland, Leland, thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. JOE CROWE: Yes, my name is Joe Crowe. I'm a cattle rancher in the Whitmore area east of Redding. We've been in the cattle business for quite a few years.

The predator problems: 1) is mountain lions; 2) is coyotes; 3) is probably people's dogs. In interest of time today, why, we'll talk about lions. We never had problems with lions until probably five or six years ago. We've lived in that country for 40-some years and we didn't have lion problems. At this time, we're restricted from using one of our pastures. It's about 1300 acres that we no longer can calve cows in it, in the late fall-winter time when the deer herds have moved down. Now we are up there right now calving. We have no choice. We're in drought conditions and we've got to move off the hay field.

As far as our losses there, why we've probably lost six head of calves, something like that. Part of the problem is -- and one other person stated this -- is you can really find no evidence. You have a ten day old calf on the ground and it's healthy and so forth. You go back three days later and you find nothing, and the cow is looking for something, too. You can blame it on a lot of things. Normally, the coyotes, you can find pieces and chunks a lot of times. The lion, you find nothing.

My mother-in-law has a ranch next to ours. She has about 3,000 acres. She runs cattle and sheep. At one time she'd run 100 head of registered sheep. The lions have cut her down to the point she's running 25 registered sheep because that's all that can be kept in a barn at night. And you have to not put them in a pen. They have to be inside a barn. In fact, she has lost lions (sic) out of a shed that has a door that can't be locked and the lions would come in. She has lost eight ewes and a ram. The ram was a registered ram that was probably a 500 -- no, I don't know. It had been in several fairs and taken first place at every fair.

My other neighbor to the south is Glen Aldridge (?), and I think you know Glen. Last week he lost one calve; a month ago he lost another one; last year he lost two calves. Lions are in the area all of the time. In fact, the gas man saw one crossing the road a week from today. Also, three or four days ago, there was a turkey hunter, who was not hunting. He was just up seeing where the turkeys roost to go hunting at a later date. A lion was in a tree and growled at him. He threw a rock at him and he didn't leave at all. In fact, he came his way and he left. (laughter) The amazing thing was the fellow went hunting the next day.

Anyway, that's all I have. And thank you for the time to testify.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Thank you for the very specific examples. I might note that in a lot of the hearings over the last years, there were many testifying that there were no such examples, as you have cited, of lions being around, and I think we know otherwise.

Joe, only very briefly, peaked my thought about another predator problem that we haven't talked about and I don't know that anybody's going to testify about it, but I probably will myself. That's the people predator. We do have a serious problem with people going out and taking advantage of our livestock, you know, for their own consumption purposes, as well as just maybe their own sport purposes. And I'm not altogether sure how we quite get at that. We do have some statutes. But it is something that I do not want to close this hearing without having acknowledged the people predator problem and the destruction that they bring forth. The lions are very creative about getting into barns and getting our animals. Bears are very creative at getting into beehives. But people are absolutely creative at getting into all kinds of structures and facilities. And I do want to make note of that.

I'd like to now introduce Mr. Robert Strawn, who is a horse rancher from Oak Run. Mr. Strawn.

A lot of times, Mr. Strawn, when we talk about the predators, we are talking about sheep and we're talking about cattle, but you're bringing a nip-sync (?) perspective to us that these effect horses, too.

MR. ROBERT STRAWN: Yeah, in my case, I raise registered quarter horses. We don't keep many mares, but they are very high quality mares. When I sell my foals, they sell from \$5 -- and I have sold them up to \$10,000. So when I lose one, you know, I've lost a substantial part of my income.

And last year was the first instance we'd had of a mountain lion. Last year one attacked a foal, but it didn't kill it. We found the lion tracks in the area and evidently the mare had fought it off.

But about two weeks ago, we did have a new foal killed by a mountain lion. I have pictures here. If they would be of any help to anyone, I'd be glad to leave them.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: I would like copies just for my own files, if I might.

MR. STRAWN: I'd be glad to leave them with you then.

Then I was asked to speak on behalf of my close neighbors. There has been losses this last year of 39 sheep, in within about a five mile area. And we know that 20 of them were mountain lions. The rest we don't know. Probably some of them were coyotes. We've always had a certain amount of coyote problem.

But that's the main reason I came here is to testify that I lost some very valuable animals to mountain lions. And the Department of Fish and Game is very cooperative in giving a depredation permit, but it still doesn't -- you know, it doesn't alter the fact that I've lost of bunch of money.

So, I won't take up a lot of your time. I know there's a lot of others that want to speak. And that is the main thing that I wanted to bring out. We do have a problem. This problem has only come up, as Joe Crowe said, in probably the last five or six years. We never had any mountain lion problems up until that time. And all of a sudden it just

seemed like they had really moved in on us. So you know, it has become more and more apparent that they're going to have to be managed in some way.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: And your problem is primarily the lion, not wild dogs or coyotes?

MR. STRAWN: We always have a certain amount of problem with wild dogs and coyotes. We've always had that. Yes, we've always had that. But I have never lost a horse to a wild dog or a coyote. In fact, this is the first time I've had foals killed, and there was no doubt about what it was. Lion tracks were right around the carcass. And I did get a depredation permit, but not the lion.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Thank you very much for testifying.

Now we've got Mr. Ron Greenslate. Ron is a good friend of mine from Napa. I think his presence here is evidencing that it is an area like, say the wine country, and you don't think there are any problems over there. There most assuredly are. Ron, welcome.

MR. RON GREENSLATE: Thank you, Senator Nielsen. We feel that this hearing is very important, a very important idea. I'm here representing myself and cattleman Herb Gunn. I'm associated with the east side landowners of Lake Berryessa, an area of about 30,000 acres.

We followed the wild pig problem at Vallejo lakes, and that's my subject-wild pigs. The arrest of a man who was heavily fined for trying to get rid of the pig nuisance, and that was very sad. Vallejo city is trying to resolve this problem at the reservoir there. And I believe you may be receiving some written testimony from them.

We don't have the wild pig problem on the east side of Lake Berryessa at the present time. But our concern is that we might have one. The Bureau of Reclamation is now updating its recreation plan at Lake Berryessa. Part of the proposed plan, as we understand it, is to turn the narrow corridor of the lake shore owned by the federal government over to Fish and Game for management. Fish and Game has indicated they'd like controlled hunting in this narrow corridor often less than 200 yards wide. Fish and Game has mentioned, on many occasions, how successful wild pig hunting has been in other similar situations. We don't necessarily agree with this, and neither does the Napa County Board of Supervisors, the Napa County Farm Bureau, the lake residents, or the property owners, or the Solano Irrigation District which is an agency of 11 cities in the county. They are very concerned, too, all of them, about the possibility of pigs being introduced in this area.

Perhaps the real reason for us traveling up here today is to ask the Legislature, yourself, to consider some legislation which would allow property owners to dispose of wild pigs found on their properties, similar to disposing of the coyote. We feel that many of the property owners up and down the state effected negatively by wild pig

populations are unaware of this hearing, and even if they were aware of it, it might be difficult for them to be here. Pigs are a real problem because they reproduce so quickly with two litters a year possible.

In closing, Jim, we'd just like to say that the private property owners shouldn't be punished for protecting his property from the damage done by these wild pigs.

And thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Ron, we thank you very much for coming up and commenting. And it is a reality that this is a problem afflicting the entire State of California. It gets into even the controlled hunting in a 200 foot of corridor, or whatever. What are the resources for the Department to manage that? Sometimes we have a lot of difficulty. Our ideas may be noble and well intended, but if there are not the resources to manage it, then we are in some difficulty.

Mr. Peter Arnold has signed up. He represents the Nevada County Farm Bureau, coming some distance. We'd like to have Peter comment.

MR. PETER ARNOLD: Senator, thank you. I am Peter Arnold. I'm Vice President of Nevada County Farm Bureau. I'm also Chairman of a group called the Coalition for Protection of People, Livestock and Wildlife. This coalition is being -- is formed in Nevada County because a petition is now being circulated to ban the use of steel jaw traps in Nevada County. And this is a problem which we see happening. Mariposa County is facing the same thing, not through referendum, but through appeal to the Board of Supervisors, has happened in the Santa Cruz County.

I'm here primarily to advise everyone that every county faces this problem, especially a county like Nevada County where you have -- I think we're the fastest growing county in the state in population -- and you have a burgeoning population of people who know nothing about livestock raising or anything else, and they're going to play on their emotions. We feel very strongly that we're not going to be able to stop the referendum from getting on the ballot, but we are going to have to fight like the dickens.

Now the one possibility that we have is the thing which now sits before the Governor with regard to Santa Cruz County, where the Governor can, I guess, at his discretion, authorize the pursuit of bringing suit against Santa Cruz County for preempting what is the domain of Fish and Game, in prohibiting steel jaw traps. So this decision may come up within the next few days. And from what I hear from Jack Parnell, it may not be a favorable decision. If anyone in this audience has access to the Governor in any way, I would advise them to try to get a favorable action to pursue this through suing the County of Santa Cruz on this. Otherwise, piece by piece, county by county, I think this is going to come up as wildlife -- or as right to lifers take the initiative and bring on



a ballot the business of outlawing of trapping. And again, we have the same problem. If you outlaw traps -- the use of traps in Nevada County, our sheep population is really going to suffer. It's suffering now.

That's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Peter, you are very accurate in the entire area of local preemption. I don't know whether or not the Governor would see fit to sue Santa Cruz County. I can say, though, that the problem goes way, way beyond. In all manner, we're confronted with local resolutions and ordinances, etc. that give us an awful lot of problems. We were facing it in another area that's not a part of this hearing, but the use of pound animals in laboratory research. I happen to think that's very important. But where organizations, noble and well intended, have been unsuccessful in the Legislature, they will go to the local level, too, and fight it out.

I think what you have done is, you know, expanded the focus here a little bit to how it's both a state and local problem and there are two fronts that must be addressed. So I do thank you very much, Peter, for your attendance and for your testimony. You've come a long way.

MR. ARNOLD: Thank you.

(End of Side 5 -- no overlap to Side 6)

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: ... for the pigs, you can take one a day or two per hundred under a special permit, so that is now allowed in an opportunity. But maybe, Ron, what we can do is work with you to be a little more facilitative in getting communication out, and people around Berryessa in knowing what's going on. Maybe we need to have some meetings up there, etc. That's not to say that more isn't needed to be done as a part of the agenda of action that is pursuit to this hearing, but that's just an update as to where we are now.

Whitney Newland is from Willows. Whitney signed up to want to testify. Whitney.

MR. WHITNEY NEWLAND: Sorry, I don't hear very good.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: We can hear you, Whitney.

MR. NEWLAND: I have to speak up loud anyhow because I can even hear myself. So I don't need that thing. I'll get over here. The man I want to address to is the Fish and Game man over there.

All right. I'm kind of a has-been. All I've got is 17 head of sheep. However, I had two killed \_\_\_\_\_ this winter right out there in \_\_\_\_\_.

Now, myself, I was raised in Mendocino County. Our survival, what we lived on was sheep, and a hunting club. And back in those days it was no rules to speak of, only varmints. So what we had was hounds. And when I was a little boy, we started this in our club, taking those hounds out, anything they could kill we got after. During the

winter months we went after the varmints. And by doing this, in a five year time, we built our buck herd up, our deer hunting. The first year in there, when the club went in there, they'd be getting something like 30 deer. In the five years time, they's getting up to 70 bucks, just because we kept the varmints out of there.

From my own experience, I think you're kidding yourself when you're trying to raise varmints and raise deer, too. As far as your deer going down and getting on people's property, when we had that place up there, we had hay fields but the deer didn't bother the hay fields because we kept the varmints away from them on the outside. They could live out there and live. That's one of the reasons your deer and your antelope are all going down on the farms.

For the past three years I've been hunting in Modoc County, among other years. But for the past three years our hunting was absolutely lousy. We didn't come up with nothing in the Valley. We pointed out, of 18 men hunting out there, which I was the stand man up in front, two years which only -- the two years that \_\_\_\_\_ deer killed each year and that's all. But what I saw up there in front, I seen coyotes following those -- what few deer we seen, here was a pack of coyotes. Years ago, good pretty coyotes; today, scroungy looking things like you never saw. Too many of them. All right.

Then this year we was out again hunting, and I can say this area looks to me like mountain lions, ain't no deer here. And so one of guys says, well, how do you -- I asked them, do you guys see any kills out there. Said no. He said well, how do you tell a kill. So I explained how to find them. Hey, we was hitting the Devil Garden (?). And that afternoon one of the guys comes out and says, I found them. There you are. So your mountain lions, your bear, and your coyotes are ruining your hunting. Up there now, on Sunday, this year I got a buck because the last day a farmer down \_\_\_\_\_ country says, Whit, come over \_\_\_\_\_ this one. I got him, simply because I wasn't out there competing with the varmints. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Whitney, thank you for your testimony. Whitney did make mention too, that predators, they're not only effecting our livestock, but other wildlife. One of the significant issues in the debate over the mountain lion moratorium was related to the kings deer herd and how that had been decimated by lions. A lot of controversy, of course, and a lot of conflicting testimony and data about it, but I think the general conclusion was that the lions had very seriously depleted that herd in some manner. So they do prey on wildlife that we would like to look at or know that they're out there, and on some occasion, maybe hunt, too.

Larry Alvares, a Flournoy wool grower has signed up to testify. Larry.

MR. LARRY ALVARES: Thank you, Senator. I didn't have a lot of time to prepare for this, but I did take a poll of all the major sheep producers that are left in Tehama

County, and asked them for their verifiable coyote losses within the last six months. And I came up with a number of 809, mostly lambs, lost to coyotes within this lambing season. I put a conservative estimate of about \$80 a head on those lambs and you come out with \$64,700 worth of lamb.

Now, most of these people are not just sitting out there counting their losses. They're trying everything they can, although that we don't have a trapping program anymore, on account of finances. They're doing everything on their own that they can think of to try to keep these losses down. For instance, the two people that had the most losses have spent about \$10,000 on a helicopter this winter. They still lost about 400 lambs, and they're still losing them.

A lot of these people that are getting hit real hard are not going to be able to sustain those losses very much longer. They're going to have to go out of business. As these sheep numbers keep dwindling, the coyotes are still going to be there. They're going to be putting more pressure on cows and wildlife, which they're putting a lot of pressure on already.

Also, most of these counties have reoccurring rabies problems. I think as these coyote numbers keep building up, the rabies may get into the coyotes which will cause another problem also.

That's all I have for you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, we thank you very much for your testimony, Larry. And 809 is a fairly significant number.

MR. ALVARES: It is for the number of sheep and producers that are left in Tehama County now. We're looking at maybe 16-18,000 head of ewes included in these people right here.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. ALVARES: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Mr. Hank Sexton from Willows signed up to testify. Hank, good morning.

MR. HANK SEXTON: Good morning, Senator. I can't claim to represent any prestigious organization. I'm just here to speak for myself and my family. I'm a neighbor of Dick Mudd's. Maybe our family has been there just a little bit longer than his has, I think, 1868 is when my forebearers took up.

I've had quite a little experience with coyotes and with sheep in my lifetime. If it's any advantage to you, I can tell you what our losses were for this year. If you'd rather have me skip over that and keep this short, I can.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, I would like you to just enter into the record with us, maybe not verbally, but your numbers of losses.

MR. SEXTON: I can do that. Suffice to say that they are considerable.

As Ed Romano mentioned, the county has, until last fall, had been off the program, the Animal Damage Control Program for several years. We tried to do our part, you know, to protect ourselves. We sit back fairly close to the mountain, more less the first line of defense for the open foothills. In fact, when the county did get one trapper last fall, I told the supervisor that being we had a pretty good trapper and we've had our own little program, to let the county trapper work elsewhere and we would try to take care of our area. Well, since the first of June, we have been able to do in 83 coyotes. What the county trapper has gotten or what the other ranchers have gotten, I'm not really sure, but the number is considerable.

I think -- I'll digress here just a minute to kind of make a point, let's say. In the early '70s, there was a young man that came here from Davis working for his Master's Degree, and he ran an economic loss survey for predator damage for his Master's Degree. After the first year, I believe through Ray Johnson, the Legislature contributed a little money and he went on the second year with it.

And at the end of that second year, they asked him to make a quick run of the state, just a quick trip. I went with him on two of his trips. He would call the extension livestock specialist in each county and get the names of the sheepmen, and then he'd just arbitrarily pick two and go and see them. I made one trip out to Napa, the mouth of the Russian River, up north to Eureka, and then back by Redding. And the other trip was out from Sacramento, to Jackson, to Yosemite Park and over around Mono Lake.

There was two things that impressed me from this trip. One, in his questionnaire that he filled out for each rancher, he would ask where do you think your coyotes are coming from? The guy would say over there on the forest service or over there on the BLM.

I think this is the way we are here. I mean, we can clean out the coyotes in our foothills. By spring we can have them pretty well down. Next fall when the first snow hits the mountain in November, look out, here they come.

Another thing that I learned from this trip with this young man -- this might not be any news to a great many people, I've noticed it's true myself. This wasn't on the questionnaire. Pret'n near everyone that we talked to volunteered this information. In the spring when the doe start having fawn, the coyotes quit bothering the sheep for a little while. That tells something about the deer.

Other than our actual losses -- and the losses on this sheet are what we have found fresh enough to absolutely verify. How many more that we haven't found soon enough -- one of the things here, we put down 15 verified losses to eagles. This is one reason we don't have more verified losses to coyotes because the eagles move right in and clean them up. You've got to be there quick or there's nothing but bones left. Eagle losses

are hard to verify because they prey on small lambs. You have a plate in the top of their skull that's about as big as a silver dollar, and that four feet is all that's left when an eagle gets done with a lamb. The evidence is hard to find. I'm sure, in my own mind, that we lose more lambs to eagles than we do to coyotes. But there's no way of proving it unless a person wants to sit out there 24 hours a day and count them. I complained about this one time. We were given a permit to harass the eagles. And as far as doing any good, it's kind of like carrying soup in a strainer. I mean, you can harass one over here, but there's more over there, and they just circle around, and there's nothing that you can do about this so far. I understand that it's still possible for Fish and Wildlife to issue depredation permits for eagles, but they haven't done it in years and years and years, and aren't about to.

On top of our actual losses, our own little predator program out there has cost us anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year in the last three years: we fly an airplane; we have hired a trapper who traps; an ATV for him to travel on; dogs, dog food; wear and tear on equipment. It gets pretty expensive.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: It's a big cost of doing business for you. That's for sure.

MR. SEXTON: Yes, it is.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, it's one of the points you've also made is that the animals that migrate off of public lands in whatever manner. You know, that as we do certain things for habitat and acquisition and preservation, if we don't manage those properties, and that wildlife and those predators, we've got a serious problem. That gets me to revisit an action point that I want to dwell more on, and that's more money in management than in acquisition in some of these properties. For example, Dye Creek or whatever. If we're going to take them over, then we've got to manage what we've got there. Let's not pay so much attention to acquiring these properties, let's manage what we've got in a better way. And that's not going to be easy. Personnel for the department, for the county, in depredation control programs and all of that, that money is not going to be easily or readily available. So we're going to have to use these scarce resources in er better ways. It sure seems to me that one of the ways to do it, whatever acquisition monies that are available, let's direct some of those to management of what we've got.

And thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. SEXTON: Well, thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: I might note too, if you 4-H'ers back there are courageous enough, I might ask you to come up here and comment a little later as to what your experiences about this are. So think about that, if you're not too afraid, I wish you would think about coming up here and just commenting as to your impressions.

Tom Gordon from Princeton had signed up wanting to comment.

MR. TOM GORDON: I just have a short comment to make in that I have livestock, but fortunately I have them in the valley and I don't have problems that these other people have in the foothills. But I raise rice in there. We have a terrible problem with blackbirds. It goes into thousands of dollars a year damage that they do.

Basically, I would just like to have the blackbirds put on this program, and they're at least mentioned in there, because we have this year after year. I have no testimony. I just read this in the paper and I came to the meeting, and not knowing if this was the place to bring it up or not.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: It definitely is.

MR. GORDON: I could have had numbers, and a lot of numbers, and I could talk for hours on this. But I won't take any more of your time, except that I would like to have this come up in the future, and at least be on the list, as that is a problem in our area, a real problem.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, Tom, thank you for emphasizing it. I am familiar with it. I've grown rice and I know what has happened. Days like today when you drain your field, the critters come in and start picking away at it. I mean, they don't have to wait until the water is gone, but it certainly helps a lot when that happens, and I've literally watched them march down a row of tomatoes seedlings popping up and harvesting my crop for me before, too. So blackbirds are a problem. Thank you for being one to raise that issue today.

MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Greg O'Sullivan, who I mentioned earlier. Greg, you're in back there. Greg represents the Colusa County wool growers, and is the son of my friend Virgil O'Sullivan who enjoyed a very historic day in the State Senate with two Colusa County Senators yesterday.

MR. GREG O'SULLIVAN: Well, I'd like to thank you first, Senator Nielsen, for this opportunity to speak. I'm going to speak as Greg O'Sullivan, stock producer today. I, as Greg O'Sullivan, stock producer, am in support of an increase in funds for the ADC.

I'd like to give you a brief history of where we run sheep, west of Maxwell and west of Williams. It's in the gentle undulating hills out west. There aren't too much brush. But we still have a terrible coyote problem out there.

The ADC does a real good job. They have a real successful program. Out west of Maxwell, the trapper out there, usually between October and March of the last two years, has picked up about 40 coyotes on about a mile worth of fence. Probably within the last five or six years on that ranch, we've lost probably about 50 lambs. So we're real happy with that.

We do have some problems on some other places. But we think that we can try to keep those under control as long as we have the ADC and the steel jaw traps. Some of these

other areas where we range sheep, we have a cooperative between the neighbors. We go out and rent helicopters, and it does get pretty expensive to try to control these.

With some of the new farm programs and things coming in, we feel that there are some concerns, especially with the conservation reserve program. You're talking about increasing habitat for wildlife, you're also increasing habitat for the coyote. And that becomes a problem because we all know the coyote doesn't stay on that particular ranch.

Again, the ADC has trained personnel to take care of the problem. We believe that the problem should be taken care of by the ADC and with that trained personnel, so that the private personnel are not handling poisons, traps, and snares as little as possible.

That's about it, what I have today to speak about. It's just that we really need this program. I can see the other counties that are trying to get in. And there is a need for this program.

It doesn't just benefit the stockmen either, I should bring out at this time. I'd like to see some of the sportsmen get up here and speak for it, too, because with the harvesting of the coyotes, the doe numbers and the fawn numbers can increase if they're properly managed.

Also the Animal Damage Control takes care of -- in our area, in Colusa County -- also takes care of orchards. There's a large depredation due to beavers on the orchards out on the east side of Colusa, and I know that they do a real good job over there.

So I think it's just real important that you take a good look at that ADC program and that we get some more funding for it.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Greg, thank you, and I will comment about that issue of funding, also.

Matt Ferrini of the Glenn County Wool Growers has signed up to testify.

MR. MATT FERRINI: Thank you, Senator. I would just like to say that I'm a neighbor of Greg's, and I could sit here and talk for a long time, too, about the coyote problems.

I'm a sheep rancher, west of Williams. Last year I lost a substantial amount of ewes and lambs, and this year it's gone down quite a bit and it's a lot better. I'd just like to say I'm happy that we have the trapping program in Colusa County. And I'd like to see it stay, and more funds if possible. And I feel that it's needed because without them, we would be completely out of business. That's my personal opinion because we have a definite problem there. We've done everything under the sun. We've stayed out all night with them. There is a problem, and I commend the trappers, and everybody who's trying to help us out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Thank you. I'd like to acknowledge that some of you who have come up here and testified probably aren't used to testifying at state legislative hearings or maybe even city council or board of supervisor hearings. I hope you find it an

encouraging experience. This is where I got started in government many years ago as a farmer, going up to the Legislature, not representing anybody but myself, and finding out that maybe I was not always heeded but I was always heard. Your testimony -- my message in that is -- your testimony does indeed count.

Mr. Ronald Thompson and Lewis Lee of the U.S.D.A. are here. They simply signed in. Would either of you gentlemen like to comment? I'm not asking you to, but if you would like to, I'd avail you of this opportunity.

MR. \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ answered questions, but we didn't come with any prepared. Just came to hear problems that we could maybe bring control over.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, thank you very much for your attendance. It is deeply appreciated and I know the abiding interest that the U.S.D.A. has, that how cooperatively they -- you work, rather -- with the Department of Food and Agriculture here, and of course, our Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Cooperation has to be woven in through all of this.

At this point and prior to concluding, if I may, I'd like to ask our 4-H young ladies if they might come up here and give me their opinions. And it doesn't have to be just regarding this issue, just about legislative process and committee hearings. Welcome.

She's presented some pictures here for testimony. Would you identify yourselves and give us your comments, please?

MISS LOVI BEESON: I'm Lovi Beeson of Potter Valley, and I'm a ...

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Would you pull that microphone a little closer to you there, so we can ...?

MISS LOVI BEESON: Okay, again I'm Lovi Beeson of Potter Valley 4-H.

MISS BETH BROWN: And I'm Beth Brown from Potter Valley 4-H.

MISS LOVI BEESON: And I'm here just to, you know, just to observe, but thank you for asking us to come up and testify. The pictures that I've given to you are from my family. We live up in kind of the hills of Potter Valley, and we've had those problems. In one night a mountain lion came into the pen where we penned up our sheep, very close to the house, and killed 17 sheep. And then something like maybe a week later, he went again close to the house, into a barn and killed some goats and left the babies.

I think that wildlife sometimes is very cruel to us, and stuff. I just think that the people who think, you know, protect the wildlife, and stuff, are kind of out of it because, I mean, most of them probably live in the city. They think, oh, the poor little kitty cats and teddy bears and stuff, that, you know, they just don't know how they really effect the farmers and ranchers.

That's all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, there is a serious problem, and that's part of the purpose



of this hearing, is to let the other side be known. We'd be respectful of people who have concern about mountain lions and their well-being, of course, but there is another side. This is an interesting picture. Looks like you were rather close to that lion, whoever took this picture. Was someone from your family the photographer?

MISS BEESON: No, just my mom.

MS. \_\_\_\_\_: Tell them about the bear kill.

MISS BEESON: Yeah, also we had the bear kills. The cow was, I guess, down and she was trying to calve, and a bear came and ate her udder totally off while she was still alive, and ate -- kind of pulled the calf out a little more and kind of ate on it. And of course, she just kind of died.

And then we also had another which was, we think, ran in by a wild animal, and drown it into a pond and drown it. She came to the surface and she had bear marks, bear claws and stuff on her.

CHAIRMAN NIELSEN: Well, thank you for your courage to speak out. I don't want to be too morbid here today, but I've had a number of my calves pulled by dogs, if you know what I mean, and that's not the way to get a live calf out.

The other young lady, do you have any further comments?

Well, I thank you very much for coming here today and listening. Thank you for bringing the pictures for the record of the committee hearing. And I would hope that you are encouraged by your experience. We're not here just to talk. We're here to raise the issue to higher levels of discussion. There are going to be some action items that we suggest. Thank you for being a part of your government. (applause)

All right! You did better than me. Most of the time I don't get the clapping like that. (laughter)

I want to make mention that John Ross of the Cattlemen's has provided us written testimony from Jay Wilson and Don Torell on behalf of the Wool Growers Association. Many of you are woolgrowers that have testified here, but we now have on record some formal testimony from the Wool Growers.

All of you who have signed up in attendance today will get a report of this committee hearing. Within a couple of weeks, we'll try to compile that and mail it out to you.

The photos that have been submitted will be available at the witness table immediately after the hearing, if you would like to view those. As I say, over the years, somewhat in my own frustration at seeing too many steel jaw trap pictures, I've tried to compile a lot of pictures of animals that have been harmed. Since they are not very pretty, I try to let people view those at their own discretion. But it does make a very important point that there's a problem out there, and that some of these critters are vicious wild beasts and they are problems.

There are a number of acts and oriented items, not of all of which I probably have gotten down here, but that I certainly will be reviewing with the members of this committee and members of the Legislature. We will be deliberating on a multitude of bills.

I might note, if you have an interest in Senator Marks' bill on steel jaw traps, on either side of that issue, it will be heard April 12 in the Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee. I do sit on that committee, and you obviously are welcome to attend.

One of the points I would like to make about all of this, it's very difficult for everybody to get information. How all of you were apprised of particular this hearing, I really don't know. Every citizen cannot be absolutely contacted, and you can't have your door knocked upon, nor can you be drug in here to testify. But I think that you can carry the message out that it does make a difference when you do. There are a multitude of ways where you can get information about the legislative matters, not only from representatives of organizations, like John Ross of the Cattlemen's or Merlin Fagan of the Farm Bureau and their newsletters, there are a lot of ways you can get that information, calling my office, or whatever.

I've heard concern about liability issue, reimbursement. Reimbursement, I don't think looks too promising; but something on liability, maybe that's possible. The property owners advisory committee and the task force on Animal Damage Control are definite in positive ideas. I think that we've got to have something going on there.

I'm glad that all agencies -- have state, federal, and in fact, local government -- are represented here, because we are going to have cooperation to solve some of our problems, the habitat particularly.

The mountain lion issue probably has been the biggest state news issue of the last year in terms of the wildlife area. But I think we've brought out here today the problems go far beyond mountain lions, such things as pigs, and eagles, and even blackbirds are our problems. Being in the rice growing business a lot of my life, I know that crayfish are problems for us out here sometimes, too. But I don't think we're going to be worrying about that in this particular hearing. Maybe they're not that big of a problem, but they do give us concerns.

Jay's point about good feed sources on the habitat areas that exist. That ties into my suggestion of better managing the resources that we now do have available and making that habitat more attractive, for example, waterfowl who are preying upon crops. But if there was sufficient feed on that property, that they may go there instead. And providing some private sector involvement on those habitat areas where farmers actually come in and plant a crop, not a scrub crop, and not just throwing seed out there, but actively producing a crop that can provide some substantial feed. If we're going to have these areas, this is how you deal with it. You manage ...

(End of Side 6 -- no overlap to Side 7)

... opinion of some of these areas. And I most assuredly believe that the Legislature, and in the budget process, and all of the entities of government do have to focus a little bit more on management of the existing resources and habitat areas than the seeming desire just to acquire more and more and more, and take it all out of production, or take it out of public access, or hunting access, or whatever.

Cooperative management agreements are going to be a premium condition of the future. And that's why all of you really do need to be involved. If we're going to solve this problem, we can't do it antagonistically. I know at any given moment, you or I have had difficulty with any given agency of state government, but that's part of my role as a legislator, to be a facilitator of meetings and communication. And I've most often found that when we can look each other in the eye, we find that we are not enemies, we are human beings, and we can reach reasonable agreements and resolutions to the problems that we have.

In terms of animal depredation control, local dollars, local resources. That is an enormous problem. And it may be dealt beyond the purview of this committee, but it certainly hits right on the head, an issue that's very important to me. And you have some former and current county supervisors out here in this audience, that is the flight of our rural counties, their funding difficulties. And if we're going to have depredation control programs, those counties do need funds.

The Legislature and the Governor actually have made a good commitment to the counties over the last few years, not maybe because of benevolence of larger urban counties, but because the rural counties really have difficulties and they've fought very hard in the Legislature to get some relief. A lot more is ahead and a lot more is needed.

I had a meeting just yesterday with a lobbyist for rural counties, and we specifically talked about an idea that I've presented to the Governor for an action oriented commission not to study the problems of rural county government -- we know what those problems are -- but to suggest additional actions that can be taken. And your expression of the Governor requesting that he would go ahead and create such a commission would be helpful to at least this idea of mine, in regarding county government funding. And what does that mean to you? That means the county having some resources for trappers and the various depredation control programs in working with you, and for the ag commissioners and their various programs. And as you know, we had some ag commissioners testify here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the hearing. I appreciate your forbearance. I believe that we're almost five minutes ahead of schedule in adjournment. And I believe that everybody who wished to comment and testify did have that opportunity.

I do want you to know that we again will be communicating with you. This will not be

the last hearing on this issue. There will be many issues that are dealt within the Legislature.

Again, April 12th, the hearing on the steel jaw trap bill.

A number of these items I am going to want to take some action on and work with you about, as we have communicated with you as to these proceedings, we would like to get some feedback. Let this not be your last occasion to be involved in government and working on this issue.

Thank you very much for your time and attendance.