

# MANAGING PREDATORS

## Prevention is key

*Livestock owners must engage in preventative predator management*

As calving season gets underway, livestock owners should assess their predator management practices. Coyotes are highly motivated scavengers possessing an inborn ability to recognize and take advantage of distressed or defenseless animals. Being opportunists, they will prey on the weak (newborn calves and lambs, or cows in difficult labour). Coyotes rarely attack and kill healthy livestock, but they will readily take advantage of sick or injured stock. Calves and lambs less than two months old, particularly those in a weak or sickly condition, represent most of the livestock prey.

Dead animals are coyotes' main winter diet. The presence of carrion on farms attracts coyotes and teaches them to return to the site looking for the same and other prospects. Improper disposal of carrion by one neighbour can cause problems for others in the area. It is imperative that livestock owners employ quick disposal of all dead livestock, stillborn, and afterbirth to reduce attractants to the calving and cattle feeding areas.

The Alberta Livestock Diseases Act requires dead animals to be disposed of within 48 hours. Under the Livestock Diseases Act, acceptable methods of disposal include rendering, composting, burial, and burning. Special direction is required for an animal suspected to have died from an infectious or reportable disease. Copies of the Alberta Livestock Diseases Act or Livestock Mortality Management (Disposal) can be obtained from Alberta Agriculture and Food Publications by calling **1-800-292-5697** or visiting [agric.gov.ab.ca](http://agric.gov.ab.ca).

### **What can you do?**

Engage in responsible management practices including proactive supervision of animals during calving will help producers reduce the threat of predation.

Livestock owners concerned with nuisance coyotes can shoot them on their own property or may give permission to permit holders of trapping licenses to trap, snare, or shoot coyotes on their property. For more information about trapping licenses, please contact your local **Fish and Wildlife office by calling 310-ESRD (3773)**.

Wetaskiwin County Agricultural Services department can provide guidance to assist livestock producers with management choices as well as aiding in the removal of coyotes where permissible. You can contact Wetaskiwin County's Pest Control services through the Agricultural Services department by phone at **780-361-6226**.