

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 9/11/2012

County: Union

General Area: Catherine Creek – state-owned land

Situation: On 8/21/2012, a ranch employee found 2 dead cows that were decomposing, but no follow up was conducted. On 9/7/2012 a hunter found a dead cow in the same area and reported it to the ranch foreman. On 9/10/2012 the ranch foreman checked the livestock and found 4 dead cows total. Wolves were suspected. ODFW was called on the morning of 9/11/2012 and examined the cattle the same morning. The investigation was conducted cooperatively by ODFW, Union County Sherriff, and USDA-Wildlife Services.

ODFW findings: Possible/Unknown

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? There was no evidence of wolf presence in the pasture. The producer has had trail cameras up for 2 years and has not captured any pictures of wolves. There are no known wolves in the area.

Summary of evidence: Nine fully decomposed and scavenged carcasses (5 two year-old cows and 4 calves) were discovered during the investigation. All appeared to have died about the same time (3 – 4 weeks ago) and showed a similar state of decomposition. The carcasses were located over a distance of about 600 yards and were in close proximity to a pasture fence along one edge of a forested pasture. Three of the carcasses were found right up next to the fence. Several of the cows had very little scavenged but had been mostly consumed by maggots. Several of the calves had been consumed by predators (bear and coyote sign was found) and their bones scattered. There was no muscle tissue left on the carcasses. The majority of the hide was present on or near each carcass. The hides were examined for scrapes and holes, and no premortem injuries were found. The cause of death of the cows is unclear, but does not appear to be related to predation of any kind.