The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) urges Congress to provide sufficient funding to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) program. ASI opposes any effort to restrict or eliminate WS funding and strongly urges continued vigilance to stave off any potential WS program attacks during House/Senate consideration of the FY 2023 Agriculture Appropriations Bill.

Wildlife Services (WS) provides Federal leadership and expertise to resolve conflicts between people and wildlife and allow them to coexist by protecting agriculture; natural resources, including threatened and endangered species; property and infrastructure; and public health and safety. Wildlife damages U.S. livestock, aquaculture, small grains, fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products each year.

Wildlife predators cause more than $232 million in death loss to livestock. WS prevents and reduces livestock predation through technical assistance (education and outreach) to producers and operational management programs.

In FY 2021, WS provided more than 20,500 technical assistance activities that enabled 44,115 livestock producers to implement improved husbandry and methods such as use of guard animals, exclusion, fencing, and predator dispersal. These activities included 31 predator management workshops attended by more than 1,200 individuals from 10 states.

In FY20, Wildlife Services supported APHIS’s emergency response efforts to animal diseases, natural disasters, hazardous spills, and wildfires. WS deployed 44 personnel on 55 deployments assisting with the COVID-19 National Vaccination Campaign. WS collaborated and coordinated with the USGS, CDC, VS and State agencies and deployed employees to respond to COVID-19 outbreaks in domestic mink, sampling 265 animals from 14 different species. WS responded to ASF detection in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and assisted the USFS in a New Mexico wildfire response.

Wildlife Services has the knowledge and skill, as well as the equipment, to track, capture and remove predators when they cause serious damage. Livestock producers are not the only group to benefit – so does the general public.

ASI supports $125,000,000, an increase to allow for $2,02 million in NEPA compliance costs, for Wildlife Damage Management and $25,000,000 million for Wildlife Services Methods Development.

For more information, please visit the ASI website at www.sheepusa.org. Please contact Jim Richards at jrichards@cagroup.com or (202) 448-9509 for more information.
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