

Glenda Wiles

From: bjhoy@localnet.com
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2012 10:38 AM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners
Subject: Wolves and economy

Dear Commissioners,

I have talked to Ravalli County ranchers who raise cattle. They say that their calves having underbite costs them a lot of money. One rancher said they estimated that one third of their calves had underbite - that was in 2003. Underbite on beef cattle in general seems to be at about 50% now. I did some calculations for a prevalence of half the calves born on a ranch with underbite. That is less prevalence than I have found in several butchered beef head collections I have done since 1996. The last 1 1/2 year old butchered steer heads I collected had 12 of 16 with underbite.

If a ranch has 300 live calves that survive to be sold, and the underbite on half of those 300 calves results in less weight gain, lets say an average of 5 pounds, that is a 750 pound loss to the rancher.

That is equivalent of the loss of one ready for market steer because of the underbite. If this happens to quite a few ranchers market heifers and steers, that is quite a loss to the economy of Ravalli County.

The brachygnathia superior/underbite is a definitive symptom of fetal hypothyroidism. In other words, the calves are seriously affected in the womb as were all those young WTD, mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, antelope, and domestic goats (as well as the small sample of butchered beef steers) we examined for the study I recently sent to you.

Does anyone have published prevalence for wolf kills of domestic livestock in Ravalli County or for wild ruminants for that matter, or do you just go by what people say. I think you need a study to show how many individuals of livestock have been confirmed to be killed by wolves. We had three white-tailed deer fawns killed on our place by the neighbor's dogs. That left 4 fawns from this years fawn crop on our place. Only 7 fawns were born to 12 year round resident does here on our land, three singles and two sets of twins. There are no wolves at our place, only mean dogs that come here during the night. I can tell a dog kill from a coyote kill. Coyotes eat their kill. Dogs bite the fawns on the head, kill them and then leave them. Dogs are well fed, so do not eat their kills.

Thank you for your consideration. If you actually get data that is reliable and/or peer reviewed, please share it with me.

Sincerely,
Judy Hoy