

National Office
2717 Wentz Ave.
Saskatoon, Sask., S7K 4B6
Tel (306) 652-9465
Fax (306) 664-6226



national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU SUBMITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON AGRICULTURE-WILDLIFE CONFLICT STRATEGY

Guelph, Ont. – The National Farmers Union (NFU) has submitted a list of recommendations to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) regarding the Agriculture-Wildlife Conflict Strategy. The recommendations are based on resolutions passed at the 2010 and 2011 Ontario regional conventions.

"As shown by resolutions brought to our last two regional conventions, the farm operations of some NFU members are being significantly impacted by wildlife, whether that be winter deer damage in strawberries or the loss of lambs to coyotes. Farmers need better programs and tools in place to lessen the impact on wildlife on their livelihood and their bottom lines," stated NFU Board Member Ann Slater.

The NFU's recommendations are as follows:

1. OMAFRA should turn to the experts on dealing with agriculture-wildlife conflicts – farmers themselves – to help promote and enhance information resources.
2. Compensation programs must be based on the fair market value for animals killed and there must be full (100%) coverage for losses of livestock.
3. Simplify the claims process with reduced paperwork and bureaucracy.
4. Federal/provincial cost-shared funding available to farmers for both prevention and protection measures to protect livestock and crops from predators and wildlife.
5. Funding needs to be available to farmers for protection measures like guard animals, fencing, scare mechanisms and targeted removal of problem animals.
6. Adapt insurance programs to better address the damage caused by wildlife to crops. As an example, at present there is no insurance coverage for winter damage by deer in strawberries.
7. Continue to increase the collaboration between OMAFRA, MNR and other stakeholders, especially farmers.

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For further information, please contact:

Ann Slater
Karen Eatwell

NFU Board Member
NFU Executive Secretary

(519) 349-2448
(519) 232-9638