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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

### **\$1.55M TARGETED TO PROTECT LIVESTOCK FROM PREDATORS**

DAWSON CREEK – Protecting B.C.’s commercial livestock sector from wildlife predator damage while preserving natural predator-prey relationships is the focus of a new pilot project, announced Minister of Agriculture and Lands Steve Thomson today.

“The livestock sector is vital to the economy of B.C. and wildlife predator damage is an increasing concern for our commercial ranchers and farmers,” said Thomson. “This project will provide industry with a protection plan for the future with the view that we also need to protect the natural wildlife population in our province.”

The B.C. Wild Predator Loss Prevention Mitigation Pilot Program will receive up to \$1.55 million in funding over three years through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF), a not-for-profit organization that manages and distributes funds on behalf of the provincial and federal governments. Program support will also be provided through the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Ministry of Environment.

“Animal loss as a result of wildlife predation is a big challenge facing livestock producers today,” said Stuart Wilson, Chair, IAF. “We are happy to provide this support to B.C.’s ranchers and farmers to help them conduct this pilot.”

The pilot project will look at prevention, mitigation, compensation, program delivery and management, while concentrating on developing a program that is easily accessible throughout the province. The overarching goal is an emphasis on more effective prevention practices. This announcement complements the 2008 commitment in the B.C. Agriculture Plan to provide \$4 million a year, with matching federal funds of \$6 million a year, to deal with wildlife damage compensation.

“This program is a vital tool to B.C. farmers and ranchers who experience losses to wild predators,” said Roland Baumann, president, BC Cattlemen's Association. “The previous program carried out for the cattle industry proved very effective, and having the funding available to continue the work and expand the program to cover more livestock sectors in the province will be a benefit.”

The B.C. Agriculture Research and Development Corporation (ARDCorp), the program delivery arm of the BC Agriculture Council, will administer the program, while responsibility for implementation will include Ministry staff and a program advisory committee of producers representing the livestock sector.

“The BC Sheep Federation is optimistic this project will assist in defining loss prevention methods, reducing adult sheep and lamb losses due to problem predators, and provide technical assistance for wild predator issues,” said Bev Greenwell, president, BC Sheep Federation. “We thank the IAF for the funding to address these issues, and commend their support to an industry we feel has significant potential for expansion.”

Other recent support for the livestock sector in British Columbia includes more than \$5.5 million provided to the BC Cattlemen’s Association for fencing-related components on Crown land, and the creation of the new ranching task force to find ways government and industry can work together to develop a long-term plan for a more profitable, self-sustaining industry.

For more information on the Ranching Task Force visit:  
[www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca)

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