

## You, your pet, and the law

Chester County dog warden Dave MacElree warns dog owners that letting their animals roam unattended can be expensive.

Owners of livestock-killing canines are subject to fines of up to \$300, and will be required to reimburse the livestock owner for damages.

In addition, dogs caught in the act of worrying, wounding or killing livestock, poultry, household pets, gamebirds or humans, may be shot. MacElree cautions would-be shooters, however, that this regulation will not insulate them from a civil suit filed by the dog's owner.

Farmers having livestock killed, injured or harassed by dogs should call their state dog warden listed in the phone book under the section containing government and other public services.

Although most counties have their own warden, some sparsely populated areas of the state, such as Potter and Tioga Counties, may have one warden representing two counties.

According to state director of dog law enforcement, Donald K. Moul, the warden's first job is to determine whether the offending animal is a domesticated dog or a wild predator. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture will not reimburse farmers for damage done by wildlife, and such claims must be submitted to the Pa. Game Commission.

If the culprit was, indeed, a domesticated animal, and the owner cannot be located, compensation will then be provided by the PDA through monies derived from the sale of dog licenses.

MacElree also reminds farmers that anyone harboring unlicensed dogs of his own, automatically forfeits his right to reimbursement should he be victimized by someone else's animals.

All dogs six months of age or older must be licensed on or before January 1, of each year. The current regular license fee is \$5.00, with a \$3.00 license available for all spayed or neutered animals.

## Dogs and coyotes

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the May 9, killings, one of their ewes was attacked by a group of dogs, and last spring another canine had to be destroyed after the free-roaming dog managed to kill two of the family's Angora rabbits. The dog was finally captured after making the mistake of entering the sheep pen.

In order to insure the safety of their animals, the Rosens installed a 4½-foot woven wire fence with barbed wire along the top and bottom. But the dogs seemed undeterred, digging beneath the wire and entering the sheep barn under cover of darkness.

"We're now planning to install sliding doors on the barn," Judy says, "but it's discouraging. We've spent all this money on fencing, and now we're forced to spend even more on the barn."

There's nothing unique about the problems at Butternut Farm. Each year throughout Pennsylvania livestock owners are plagued by packs of free-roaming dogs whose

owners lack the responsibility to keep their pets within property lines.

Though many types of livestock are subject to dog predation, sheep are the most vulnerable, according to state director of dog law enforcement, Donald R. Moul. The director points out that sheep's tendency to run rather than stand their ground, combined with their accessibility on pasturelands, make the animals easy prey for foot-loose canines looking for nocturnal sport.

And the problem comes to a head each spring with the arrival of the lamb crop.

"In the southern part of the county I've had several problem areas and damage complaints have been running at a frequency of about two a week this spring," says Chester County state dog warden, Dave MacElree.

Another couple quite familiar with MacElree's problems are Bobbie and Walt Leis, of Mistralee Farm. The Leis's raise about 100 head of registered Corriedales on their 15 acre farm south of Oxford. Bred for both wool and meat, the

breed provides naturally colored fleeces for the hand-spinning market.

"The situation is really getting out of hand in this area," Bobbie emphasizes, adding that at least once a month one of them makes an emergency dash to the barn—shotgun in hand—between 12 midnight and 6 a.m., to scare marauding dogs away from their animals.

But on March 24, the Leis's didn't make it to the barn in time.

"It was about 6 a.m. when I heard our dog barking," Bobbie recalls. "When I got to the barn I found four of our yearling rams already dead with large areas of wool torn from their necks, ears and legs. We had four other large rams that the dogs had managed to box into a corner. Their legs and ears were chewed, but we managed to save them with antibiotics."

"There were three dogs involved, two small ones and a large Shepherd-type. I managed to shoot the larger one, but he got away with the others."

Though German Shepherd-type breeds were involved in both of the above incidents, MacElree points out that almost any of the larger breeds can become sheep killers.

"I had an incident about two months ago in East Goshen Township that involved a Doberman-Great Dane cross, and a Brittany spaniel," the warden points out. "We've had problems with Labradors and Irish Setters, too, but if I had to single out one breed, I'd say that Siberian huskies would head the list. Second would be mixed-breed German Shepherds."

Another Chester County resident who may well agree with MacElree's ranking is Lillian Leonhard of Westchester. It was on the morning of May 10, when a pair of Siberians entered her barn and attacked a goat. Two days later the animal died of her injuries.

In the western part of the state, Green County dog warden Oliver Kelly, agrees that huskies and Dobermans can be trouble, but ranks the German Shepherd as his county's number one offender.

Green County extension agent William Brown reports just over 100 sheep kills in 1983, and feels that the reported number may only be scratching the surface among his county's 200-plus shepherds.

"It seems that most everyone here who has sheep has had dog problems within the past few years," Brown observes. "The frustrating thing is that most of these animals are pets that could easily be controlled by their owners."

Though ranchers in the western states are well-known for their Hatfield-McCoy relationship with coyotes, the wild dogs are hardly competition for their domesticated cousins when it comes to Pennsylvania sheep mortality.

Though in recent years coyotes have become established in the northern and central parts of Pennsylvania, McKean County extension agent Jack Erway says that he is not aware of any coyote problems in his area.

New York State shepherds may find the coyote's halo a bit tarnished, however. Erway relates a recent incident involving a Danville-area breeder of Columbia sheep, who lost 25 ewes within a three-day period to coyotes this spring.

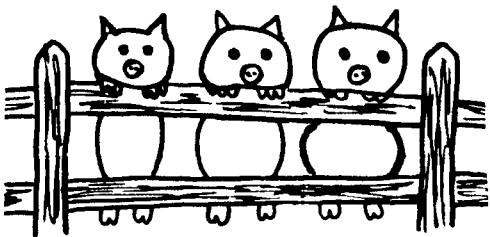
State director Donald Moul translates the problem to dollars and cents, emphasizing that Pennsylvania's wildlife is responsible for only about 10 percent of the damage claims coming to his office.

When a farmer loses livestock of any kind to dogs, the Pa. Department of Agriculture will provide compensation if the offending animal's owner cannot be located. During 1983, 330 such claims were processed through Moul's

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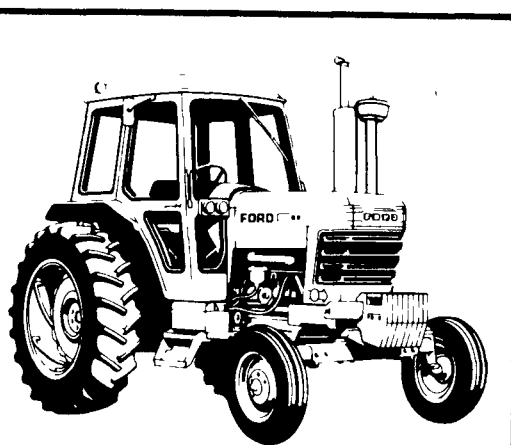
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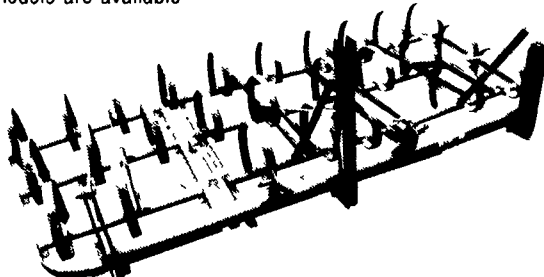
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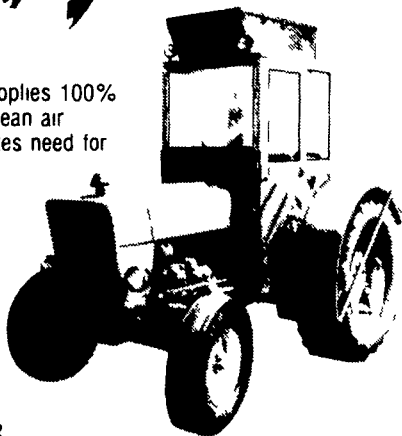


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