Death Loss Trends in the U.S. Sheep Industry: 1994 to 2014
Sheep Death Loss Study 2015

The USDA’s National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Wildlife Services (WS), conducted the Sheep and Lambs Predator and Nonpredator Death Loss in the United States 2015 Study in tandem with NASS’ annual Sheep and Goat Report in January 2015. This collaborative study has been taking place every five years since 1995 and aims to quantify amounts, values, and causes of death loss in sheep and lambs in the United States.

SMALL OPERATIONS DROVE INDUSTRY GROWTH

As a percentage of inventory, sheep and lamb losses have seen only slight increases over the past two decades.

PERCENTAGE OF INVENTORY LOST AND VALUE OF LOSSES

Overall value of losses, however, increased by 61% over the past 10 years.

CAUSES OF SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES IN 2014

Predator Causes

Of the 11,512 sheep lost to predator causes, the top 3 known causes by percentage of lost sheep were:

- Coyotes: 31.8%
- Dogs: 28.3%
- Mountain lions: 15.3%

Nonpredator Causes

Of the 308,283 sheep lost to nonpredator causes, the top 3 known causes by percentage of lost sheep were:

- Old age: 24.3%
- Weather-related events: 22.0%
- Internal parasites: 10.3%

USE OF NONLETHAL PREDATOR DAMAGE MANAGEMENT METHODS INCREASED

The percentage of operations using any nonlethal predator damage management methods increased.

For operations using any nonlethal methods, the percentage that used multiple methods increased.

For a more detailed briefing on this study and full report, visit: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/monitoring-and-surveillance/nahms/nahms_general_studies

Value of losses calculated as the product of the average of producer-reported values of the sheep and lambs and the number of sheep and lambs lost.

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Note: Surveys before 2004 did not ask about value of losses. All values are reported in terms of January 2015 dollars using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator: https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

Note: The category "other predators" is omitted.

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Note: The category "unknown nonpredator causes" is omitted.

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Note: The category "sudden death/Sheep Death Loss 2015.pdf is omitted.

Value of losses: $44.6M
Value of losses: $37.3M
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