



The Livestock Loss Board consists of five members appointed by the governor. Three members must have livestock backgrounds and two members must have wildlife backgrounds. Board member contact information can be found on our website www.llb.mt.gov. Legislators created the board and programs during the 2007 legislative session. Laws were created that direct the board in two areas, compensation and loss prevention. These laws were developed by the Wolf Management Advisory Council which was created by Governor Marc Racicot. George Edwards was hired as the Executive Director in 2007 and continues in that position.

Originally the board was established to cover only wolf caused livestock losses. Legislators' added grizzly bear caused loss in 2013 and mountain lion caused loss in 2017. During this time the board had a \$200,000 statutory appropriation to pay death loss only claims. Money from this fund could not be used to pay a multiplier for losses. Board operations and compensation program are funded using state general fund dollars. Recently during the 2019 legislative session, legislators increased the statutory appropriation from \$200,000 to \$300,000 in order to cover livestock death loss. In calendar year 2019 the board has paid out \$143,467 for livestock killed by grizzly bears. This number may increase as the board is still receiving loss claims from the fall of 2019. Claims from all three predators covered by the board is currently at \$254,014 for 2019.

The primary law of interest is 2-15-3112, MCA. This law describes the type of livestock covered as well as how livestock values are determined. Here is a link to that law: https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0020/chapter_0150/part_0310/section_0120/0020-0150-0310-0120.html.

A key point to note is that the definition of livestock covered by this board is different than livestock covered by the Department of Livestock. Not all forms of livestock are covered by the board. A key point to note is a law that created a five million dollar trust fund. Interest generated by the trust fund was to cover all aspects of the board but to date no money has been placed in the trust fund. The board is unique in that they can receive money from any source. What this means is that an individual or organization can donate money to be placed in the trust. If there is a strong desire for the board to pay a multiplier for death loss claims or loss prevention grants, funding for the trust fund is vital.

Montana Woolgrowers Association sought legislation for loss prevention twice in the legislature. Both times the governor vetoed the bills. This organization was also the driver to get the statutory appropriations we currently use to pay death loss claims. Funding for loss prevention has been extremely difficult. Senator Tester introduced a national bill in 2008 to help with compensation and loss

prevention for wolves only. Although the bill passed, funding was not included in the original legislation. Senator Tester was successful in obtaining an appropriation a few years later. The board applies for a federal grant each year. In 2019 the board received \$30,000 for compensation and \$90,000 for loss prevention. This money is restricted to wolf only projects. No money has been appropriated for grizzly bear or mountain lion loss prevention.

Money from the federal grant has been used to fund range riders, carcass removal, fladry projects and the purchase of guard dogs. Board members decided to try something new a few years ago. They bought an enclosed trailer and filled it with loss prevention tools. The first year the tools could only be used for wolf loss prevention projects. Now they can be used for grizzly loss prevention as well. A partnership was formed with USDA Wildlife Services where they supply personnel to take the trailer and supplies out to ranchers so they can try out loss prevention tools. The idea behind this was that some loss prevention methods may be too expensive for a rancher to try out. By trying out the tools they can see if it works for their ranch. Adam Baca was hired by USDA Wildlife Services to install the tools. If a rancher is interested in trying out new methods they can call the USDA State Director, John Steuber at 406-657-6464.

Excess money from the compensation fund will now roll over into a new fund that may be used for grizzly bear loss prevention. There was no excess funds in 2019 but with the increased appropriation by the legislature, the board may have limited funding available later this year. Email George Edwards at gedwards@mt.gov to get on a list to be notified when grant money is available. The board also posts when grant submissions are accepted on their Facebook page, "Livestock Loss Board".

A loss prevention toolkit is available on the board's website, www.llb.mt.gov. The Montana Stockgrowers Association along with the board created the toolkit as a resource for loss prevention practices as well as important contact information.

A common question received by the board is what can we do when a grizzly bear shows up in their pasture, corral or yard. Also available on our website are guidelines provided by USFWS for individuals letting know what they can do when a grizzly bear shows up on their ranch. This is an important resource to help people from potentially breaking a law related to grizzly bears.