



# NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE  
COLORADO FIELD OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 150969 · Lakewood, CO 80215-0969



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Contact: Rodger Ott  
(800) 392-3202

## COLORADO SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES – 2023

Colorado sheep and lamb producers lost 37,000 animals to weather, predators, disease and other causes during 2023, representing a total value of \$8.81 million, according to a survey conducted by the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. This study was undertaken at the request of the Colorado Sheep and Wool Authority, who also provided funding. The total number of sheep and lambs lost was 5,000 head less than 2019 (the last year this study was done), but the total value of inventory lost was 3.0 percent more than 2019. The January 1, 2023, inventory was 415,000 head. The lamb crop for 2023 was 175,000 head. Lambs lost before docking during 2023 was 9,000 head. Sheep and lamb deaths for 2023 amounted to 6.2 percent of the 2023 sheep and lamb supply (inventory plus lamb crop plus lambs lost before docking, 599,000 head).

The number of sheep and lambs lost to all predators totaled 18,600 head, down 6,700 head from 2019. Lamb losses by all predators amounted to 15,600 head, down 12.8 percent from 2019. The number of sheep lost to all predators totaled 3,000 head, down 4,400 head from 2019. Predators caused an estimated \$4.35 million in losses in 2023, down 15.6 percent from 2019. Losses due to predators amounted to 3.1 percent of the 2023 sheep and lamb supply and 50.3 percent of all sheep and lamb deaths. Coyotes remained the largest predator for both sheep and lambs. Coyotes accounted for 45.7 percent of the predator caused losses and 23.0 percent of all death losses in the state. The value of losses attributed to coyotes was \$1.98 million.

The total value of non-predatory losses was \$4.46 million in 2023, compared with \$3.39 million in 2019. Non-predatory losses accounted for 49.7 percent of all losses. The largest identified non-predatory cause of losses was due to weather conditions at 6,200 head. Sheep lost to non-predatory factors totaled 9,000 head, up from 4,600 from 2019. Non-predatory lamb losses came in at 9,400 head, 2,700 head less than in 2019.

Lambs lost to all unknown causes totaled 1,700 head, compared with 3,800 head in 2019. Unknown causes claimed 1,500 sheep, compared with 1,600 head in 2019.

The sheep and lamb survey utilized multi-frame sampling procedures. The survey involved drawing a random sample from a list of livestock producers maintained by the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Colorado Field Office. In addition, sheep producers living in a selected sample of area segments were interviewed. This procedure assures complete coverage of sheep producers by accounting for ranchers/farmers who may not be on the list.

Sheep and lamb loss estimates published by the USDA include sheep losses for the entire year, but include only those lamb losses that occur after docking. This special report also includes an estimate of lambs lost before docking.

## Losses of Sheep and Lambs Combined, by Cause: Colorado, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2023 <sup>1</sup>

Cause of Loss	2007	2009	2011	2014	2019	2023
	Number of Head					
Bear	7,900	3,800	2,200	4,200	6,100	5,200
Bobcat	300	600	500	300	1,000	500
Coyote	12,100	8,900	7,700	10,600	12,100	8,500
Dog	500	300	300	500	300	700
Mountain Lion	1,400	800	700	1,100	2,500	1,100
Foxes	800	700	1,000	700	800	700
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	200	300	300	400	1,500	900
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	900	400
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	600	600	400	1,000	100	600
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>23,800</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>13,100</b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>25,300</b>	<b>18,600</b>
Diseases	4,800	2,700	9,800	300	400	1,000
Enterotoxaemia	NA	1,600	4,100	2,400	1,500	1,100
Weather Conditions	4,900	3,100	10,900	10,200	5,100	6,200
Lambing Complications	3,400	3,100	2,400	4,100	2,600	3,400
Old Age	1,700	900	1,000	1,800	900	500
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	100	2,100
Poison	1,200	1,400	1,200	1,600	700	1,500
Theft	200	(D)	500	300	100	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	2,000	7,200	5,000	10,500	5,300	2,600
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>18,200</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>34,900</b>	<b>31,200</b>	<b>16,700</b>	<b>18,400</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>42,000</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>48,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>42,000</b>	<b>37,000</b>
Percent of Total by Cause	Percent					
Bear	18.8	10.6	4.6	8.4	14.5	14.1
Bobcat	0.7	1.7	1.0	0.6	2.4	1.4
Coyote	28.8	24.7	16.0	21.2	28.8	23.0
Dog	1.2	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.7	1.9
Mountain Lion	3.3	2.2	1.5	2.2	6.0	3.0
Foxes	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.9
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	3.6	2.4
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.1	1.1
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	1.4	1.7	0.8	2.0	0.2	1.6
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>50.3</b>
Diseases	11.4	7.5	20.4	0.6	1.0	2.7
Enterotoxaemia	NA	4.4	8.5	4.8	3.6	3.0
Weather Conditions	11.7	8.6	22.7	20.4	12.1	16.8
Lambing Complications	8.1	8.6	5.0	8.2	6.2	9.2
Old Age	4.0	2.5	2.1	3.6	2.1	1.4
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.2	5.7
Poison	2.9	3.9	2.5	3.2	1.7	4.1
Theft	0.5	(D)	1.0	0.6	0.2	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	4.8	20.0	10.4	21.0	12.6	7.0
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>72.7</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>49.7</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total Loss as a Percent of Supply<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Dollar Value of Losses by Cause	1,000 dollars					
Bear	824	436	406	850	1,271	1,226
Bobcat	49	61	72	60	195	115
Coyote	1,219	885	1,370	2,133	2,458	1,983
Dog	51	41	51	101	65	169
Mountain Lion	152	92	136	222	518	261
Foxes	69	69	173	140	159	161
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	17	27	67	80	293	207
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	179	92
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	60	61	82	201	20	141
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>2,442</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>2,357</b>	<b>3,786</b>	<b>5,156</b>	<b>4,353</b>
Diseases	478	276	1,774	61	90	255
Enterotoxaemia	NA	164	802	481	296	256
Weather Conditions	487	360	1,948	2,042	1,007	1,529
Lambing Complications	388	332	438	824	528	792
Old Age	279	143	212	369	203	128
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	23	486
Poison	151	173	214	324	146	380
Theft	17	(D)	82	60	23	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	251	719	824	2,085	1,082	633
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>2,050</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>6,294</b>	<b>6,245</b>	<b>3,395</b>	<b>4,457</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>4,492</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>8,651</b>	<b>10,030</b>	<b>8,550</b>	<b>8,810</b>

(D) indicates Un-published: i.e. less than 100 head.

<sup>1</sup> Lamb losses include both before and after docking losses.

<sup>2</sup> Other/Unknown includes Other and Unknown causes combined with Un-published causes.

<sup>3</sup> Supply equals beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> inventory plus lamb crop plus before docking death loss.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Losses of Sheep, by Cause: Colorado, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2023

Cause of Loss	2007	2009	2011	2014	2019	2023
	Number of Head					
Bear	1,800	1,400	900	1,900	2,700	1,200
Bobcat	300	100	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Coyote	2,200	1,300	900	2,600	3,300	1,100
Dog	100	200	100	200	200	300
Mountain Lion	400	300	100	300	1,000	300
Foxes	(D)	100	(D)	(D)	100	(D)
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	100	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	100	100	100	100	(D)	100
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>7,400</b>	<b>3,000</b>
Diseases	800	500	8,000	100	400	1,000
Enterotoxaemia	NA	300	3,000	100	100	100
Weather Conditions	800	1,200	300	400	400	4,100
Lambing Complications	1,200	800	500	800	700	400
Old Age	1,700	900	1,000	1,800	900	500
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	100	100
Poison	600	700	400	800	300	1,400
Theft	(D)	(D)	200	(D)	100	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	1,000	1,100	500	900	1,600	1,400
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>9,000</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>
Percent of Total by Cause	Percent					
Bear	16.4	15.6	5.6	19.0	22.5	10.0
Bobcat	2.7	1.1	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Coyote	20.0	14.4	5.6	26.0	27.5	9.2
Dog	0.9	2.2	0.6	2.0	1.7	2.5
Mountain Lion	3.6	3.3	0.6	3.0	8.3	2.5
Foxes	(D)	1.1	(D)	(D)	0.8	(D)
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.8	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	0.9	1.1	0.6	1.0	(D)	0.8
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>25.0</b>
Diseases	7.3	5.6	50.0	1.0	3.3	8.3
Enterotoxaemia	NA	3.3	18.8	1.0	0.8	0.8
Weather Conditions	7.3	13.3	1.9	4.0	3.3	34.2
Lambing Complications	10.9	8.9	3.1	8.0	5.8	3.3
Old Age	15.5	10.0	6.3	18.0	7.5	4.2
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.8	0.8
Poison	5.5	7.8	2.5	8.0	2.5	11.7
Theft	(D)	(D)	1.3	(D)	0.8	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	9.1	12.2	3.1	9.0	13.3	11.7
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>75.0</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Dollar Value of Losses by Cause	1,000 dollars					
Bear	296	222	178	390	608	306
Bobcat	49	16	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Coyote	362	206	180	533	743	281
Dog	16	32	9	41	45	77
Mountain Lion	66	48	26	62	225	77
Foxes	(D)	16	(D)	(D)	23	(D)
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	23	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	16	16	11	21	(D)	26
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>1,046</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>765</b>
Diseases	132	79	1447	21	90	255
Enterotoxaemia	NA	48	600	21	23	26
Weather Conditions	132	190	58	82	90	1,046
Lambing Complications	197	127	96	164	158	102
Old Age	279	143	212	369	203	128
On Back	NA	NA	NA	NA	23	26
Poison	99	111	81	164	68	357
Theft	(D)	(D)	33	(D)	23	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	164	174	33	185	360	357
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>2,295</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>2,963</b>	<b>2,050</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>3,060</b>

(D) indicates Un-published: i.e. less than 100 head.

<sup>1</sup> Other/Unknown includes Other and Unknown causes combined with Un-published causes.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Losses of All Lambs, by Cause: Colorado, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2023<sup>1</sup>

Cause of Loss	2007	2009	2011	2014	2019	2023
	Number of Head					
Bear	6,100	2,400	1,300	2,300	3,400	4,000
Bobcat	(D)	500	500	300	1,000	500
Coyote	9,900	7,600	6,700	8,000	8,800	7,400
Dog	400	100	200	300	100	400
Mountain Lion	1,000	500	600	800	1,500	800
Foxes	800	600	1,000	700	700	700
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	200	300	300	400	1,500	900
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	400
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	500	500	400	900	100	500
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>18,900</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>13,700</b>	<b>17,900</b>	<b>15,600</b>
Diseases	4,000	2,200	1,800	200	(D)	(D)
Enterotoxaemia	NA	1,300	1,100	2,300	1,400	1,000
Weather Conditions	4,100	1,900	10,600	9,800	4,700	2,100
Lambing Complications	2,200	2,300	1,900	3,300	1,900	3,000
Old Age	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
On Back	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	2,000
Poison	600	700	800	800	400	100
Theft	200	(D)	300	300	(D)	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	1,000	6,100	4,500	9,600	3,700	1,200
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>12,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>26,300</b>	<b>12,100</b>	<b>9,400</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>27,000</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>
Percent of Total by Cause	Percent					
Bear	19.7	8.9	4.1	5.8	11.3	16.0
Bobcat	(D)	1.9	1.6	0.8	3.3	2.0
Coyote	31.9	28.1	20.9	20.0	29.3	29.6
Dog	1.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.3	1.6
Mountain Lion	3.2	1.9	1.9	2.0	5.0	3.2
Foxes	2.6	2.2	3.1	1.8	2.3	2.8
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	0.6	1.1	0.9	1.0	5.0	3.6
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.7	1.6
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	1.6	1.9	1.3	2.3	0.3	2.0
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>62.4</b>
Diseases	12.9	8.1	5.6	0.5	(D)	(D)
Enterotoxaemia	NA	4.8	3.4	5.8	4.7	4.0
Weather Conditions	13.2	7.0	33.1	24.5	15.7	8.4
Lambing Complications	7.1	8.5	5.9	8.3	6.3	12.0
Old Age	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
On Back	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	8.0
Poison	1.9	2.6	2.5	2.0	1.3	0.4
Theft	0.6	(D)	0.9	0.8	(D)	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	3.2	22.6	14.1	24.0	12.3	4.8
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Dollar Value of Losses by Cause	1,000 dollars					
Bear	528	214	229	460	663	920
Bobcat	(D)	45	72	60	195	115
Coyote	857	679	1,190	1,600	1,716	1,702
Dog	35	9	42	60	20	92
Mountain Lion	87	45	110	160	293	184
Foxes	69	54	173	140	137	161
Wolves	NA	NA	NA	NA	(D)	(D)
Eagles	17	27	67	80	293	207
Ravens	NA	NA	NA	NA	156	92
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	43	45	71	180	20	115
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>1,637</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,953</b>	<b>2,740</b>	<b>3,491</b>	<b>3,588</b>
Diseases	346	197	328	40	(D)	(D)
Enterotoxaemia	NA	116	202	460	273	230
Weather Conditions	355	170	1,890	1,960	917	483
Lambing Complications	191	206	343	660	371	690
Old Age	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
On Back	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	460
Poison	52	63	133	160	78	23
Theft	17	(D)	48	60	(D)	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>2</sup>	87	545	791	1,900	722	276
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>1,048</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>3,734</b>	<b>5,240</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,162</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>2,412</b>	<b>5,688</b>	<b>7,980</b>	<b>5,850</b>	<b>5,750</b>

<sup>1</sup>Lamb losses include both before and after docking losses.

<sup>2</sup>Other/Unknown includes Other and Unknown causes combined with Un-published causes.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Losses of Lambs, Before and After Docking, by Cause: Colorado, 2019 & 2023

Cause of Loss	2019	2023	2019	2023
	Before Docking		After Docking	
	Number of Head			
Bear	800	500	2,600	3,500
Bobcat	500	200	500	300
Coyote	3,300	1,800	5,500	5,600
Dog	(D)	(D)	100	400
Mountain Lion	500	100	1,000	700
Foxes	500	300	200	400
Wolves	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Eagles	1,200	500	300	400
Ravens	500	200	300	200
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	(D)	(D)	100	500
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>7,300</b>	<b>3,600</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>12,000</b>
Diseases	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Enterotoxaemia	(D)	300	1,400	700
Weather Conditions	1,700	2,000	3,000	100
Lambing Complications	1,900	3,000	NA	NA
Old Age	NA	NA	NA	NA
On Back	(D)	(D)	(D)	2,000
Poison	(D)	100	400	(D)
Theft	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Other/Unknown <sup>1</sup>	2,100	(D)	1,600	1,200
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>

(D) indicates Un-published: i.e. less than 100 head.

<sup>1</sup>Other/Unknown includes Other and Unknown causes combined with Un-published causes.

Totals may not add due to rounding.