



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture  
**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**  
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Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture



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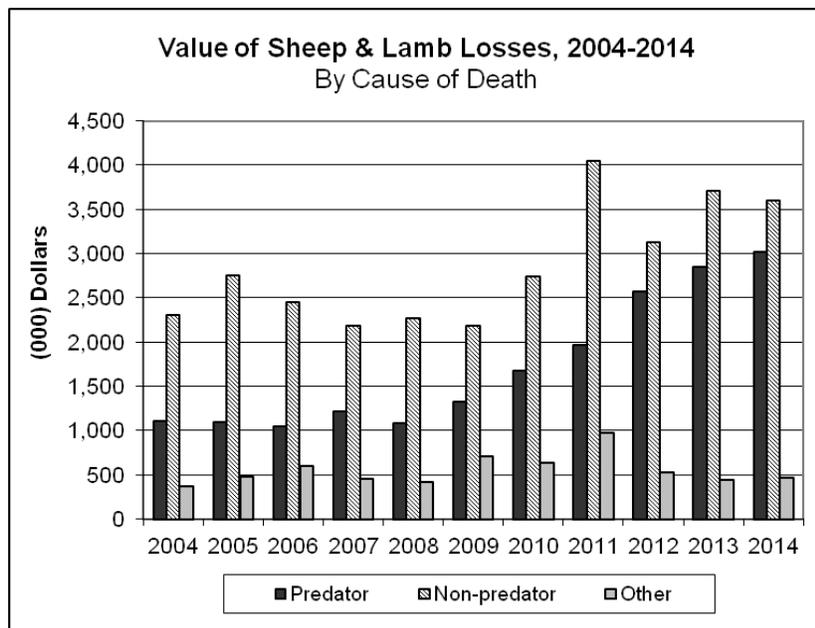
## MONTANA SHEEP & LAMB LOSSES – 2014

Montana sheep and lamb producers lost 39,000 animals to weather, predators, disease and other causes during 2014, representing a total value of \$7.3 million, according to a survey conducted by USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Mountain Regional Field Office. The total number of sheep and lambs lost was 700 head less than last year, and the total value of inventory lost was 5 percent more than a year ago. The January 1, 2014 inventory was 220,000 head. The lamb crop for 2014 was 200,000 head. Lambs lost before docking during 2014 was 12,000 head. Sheep and lamb deaths for 2014 amounted to 9 percent of the 2014 sheep and lamb supply (inventory plus lamb crop plus lambs lost before docking).

The number of sheep and lambs lost to all predators totaled 16,400 head, up 200 head from last year. Lamb losses by all predators amounted to 13,400 head, up 1 percent from last year. The number of sheep lost to all predators totaled 3,000 head, up 100 head from a year ago. Predators caused an estimated \$3.0 million in losses in 2014, up 6 percent from the previous year. Losses due to predators amounted to 3.8 percent of the 2014 sheep and lamb supply and 42 percent of all sheep and lamb deaths. Coyotes remained the largest predator for both sheep and lambs. Coyotes accounted for 80 percent of the predator caused losses and 34 percent of all death losses in the state. The value of losses attributed to coyotes was \$2.4 million.

The total value of non-predatory losses was \$3.8 million in 2014, compared with \$3.7 million in 2013. Non-predatory losses accounted for 52 percent of all losses. The largest non-predatory cause of losses was due to weather conditions at 6,300 head. Sheep lost to non-predatory factors totaled 7,800 head, up 13 percent from 2013. Non-predatory lamb losses came in at 12,400 head, 1,700 head less than a year ago.

Lambs lost to unknown causes totaled 1,200 head, compared with 1,600 head last year. Unknown causes claimed 1,200 sheep, compared with 900 head last year. The value of sheep and lambs lost to unknown causes was at \$463,800, up 5 percent from last year.



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## Methodology and Definitions

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, Montana 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.

## Cooperation

This study was undertaken at the request of the Montana Wool Growers Association who also provided funding. The USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office conducted the survey and expresses appreciation to all cooperating sheep producers.

**Table 1: Sheep & Lambs: Inventory, Death Loss, and Percent of Total Inventory Lost, Montana, 2004-2014**

Year	January 1 Inventory	Lamb Crop	All Sheep Losses	Lamb Losses			Total Loss	Percent of Total Supply Lost <sup>1/</sup>
				Before Docking	After Docking	All Lambs		
				(000) Head				
2004	300	260	13	17	14	31	44	7.6
2005	295	255	12	19	15	34	46	8.1
2006	280	255	14	20	17	37	51	9.2
2007	275	255	14	18	18	36	50	9.1
2008	270	235	14	19	17	36	50	9.5
2009	255	235	15	21	20	41	56	11.0
2010	245	220	13	18	17	35	48	9.9
2011	230	205	12	20	16	36	48	10.5
2012	225	210	12	15	16	31	43	9.6
2013	235	200	11	13	16	29	40	8.9
2014	220	200	12	12	15	27	39	9.0

<sup>1/</sup> Total supply equals January 1 inventory, plus lamb crop, plus lambs lost before docking.

**Table 2: Sheep & Lambs: Death Losses by Cause and Value of Loss, Montana, 2004-2014**

Year	Predator Losses		Non-Predator Loss	Unknown Causes	Value of Losses			
	Total	Percent of Total Inventory Lost <sup>1/</sup>			Predator	Non Predator	Unknown	Total
	(000) Head	Percent						
					(000) Head			
2004	13.7	2.4	26.0	4.3	1,102.6	2,306.2	364.3	3,773.1
2005	12.4	2.2	28.4	5.2	1,096.4	2,755.6	477.6	4,329.6
2006	14.1	2.5	29.6	7.3	1,044.4	2,453.7	600.3	4,098.4
2007	17.0	3.1	27.5	5.5	1,214.4	2,189.3	458.0	3,861.7
2008	15.2	2.9	29.2	5.6	1,078.3	2,272.6	412.7	3,763.6
2009	18.8	3.7	28.0	9.2	1,328.3	2,185.7	713.1	4,227.1
2010	17.3	3.6	24.9	5.8	1,676.9	2,747.9	641.2	5,066.0
2011	13.6	3.0	28.2	6.2	1,967.1	4,057.3	971.6	6,996.0
2012	18.3	4.1	21.1	3.6	2,574.0	3,135.0	531.0	6,240.0
2013	16.2	3.6	21.0	2.5	2,849.5	3,709.5	442.0	7,001.0
2014	16.4	3.8	20.2	2.4	3,021.1	3,838.1	463.8	7,323.0

<sup>1/</sup> Total inventory equals Jan 1 inventory, plus lamb crop, plus lambs lost before docking.

**Table 3: Sheep & Lambs: Death Losses by Cause, Montana 2013-2014**

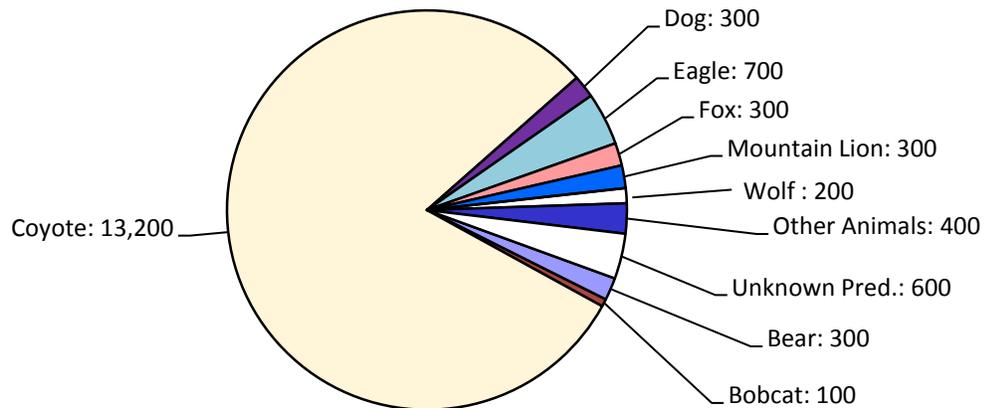
Cause of Loss	SHEEP LOSS				LAMB LOSS				TOTAL LOSS			
	Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000) <sup>1/</sup>		Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000) <sup>2/</sup>		Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000)	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
<b>Predators</b>												
Bear	300	200	54.0	41.5	500	100	87.5	17.9	800	300	141.5	59.4
Bobcat	--	--	--	--	100	100	17.5	17.9	100	100	17.5	17.9
Coyote	2,200	2,500	396.0	518.8	10,600	10,700	1,855.0	1,915.3	12,800	13,200	2,251.0	2,434.1
Dog	100	100	18.0	20.8	200	200	35.0	35.8	300	300	53.0	56.6
Eagle	100	--	18.0	--	600	700	105.0	125.3	700	700	123.0	125.3
Fox	--	--	--	--	600	300	105.0	53.7	600	300	105.0	53.7
Mountain Lion	100	200	18.0	41.5	100	100	17.5	17.9	200	300	35.5	59.4
Wolf	--	--	--	--	--	200	--	35.8	--	200	--	35.8
Other Animals	--	--	--	--	100	400	17.5	71.6	100	400	17.5	71.6
Unknown Predators	100	--	18.0	--	500	600	87.5	107.4	600	600	105.5	107.4
<b>Total Predators</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>522.0</b>	<b>622.5</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>2,327.5</b>	<b>2,398.6</b>	<b>16,200</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>2,849.5</b>	<b>3,021.1</b>
<b>Non-Predators</b>												
Total Diseases	1,400	1,100	252.0	228.3	3,500	2,100	612.5	375.9	4,900	3,200	864.5	604.2
Lambing Complications	800	800	144.0	166.0	3,600	2,800	630.0	501.2	4,400	3,600	774.0	667.2
Old Age	2,900	2,600	522.0	539.5	--	--	--	--	2,900	2,600	522.0	539.5
On Back	300	400	54.0	83.0	--	--	--	--	300	400	54.0	83.0
Poison	300	200	54.0	41.5	300	200	52.5	35.8	600	400	106.5	77.3
Theft	100	1,900	18.0	394.3	200	1,400	35.0	250.6	300	3,300	53.0	644.9
Weather Conditions	500	700	90.0	145.3	5,600	5,600	980.0	1,002.4	6,100	6,300	1,070.0	1,147.7
Other	600	100	108.0	20.8	900	300	157.5	53.7	1,500	400	265.5	74.5
<b>Total Non-Predators</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>7,800</b>	<b>1,242.0</b>	<b>1,618.5</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>2,467.5</b>	<b>2,219.6</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>20,200</b>	<b>3,709.5</b>	<b>3,838.1</b>
<b>Unknown Causes</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>162.0</b>	<b>249.0</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>280.0</b>	<b>214.8</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>442.0</b>	<b>463.8</b>
<b>Total Loss</b>	<b>10,700</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>1,926.0</b>	<b>2,490.0</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>27,000</b>	<b>5,075.0</b>	<b>4,833.0</b>	<b>39,700</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>7,001.0</b>	<b>7,323.0</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Using average reported value for Ewes 1+.

<sup>2/</sup> Using average reported value for Market lambs under 1 year.

-- Denotes less than 100 head.

**Sheep and Lamb Loss by Predators 2014**



**Table 4: Sheep & Lambs: Percent of Death Losses by Cause, Montana, 2004-2014**

Cause of Loss	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Predators</b>											
Bear	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Bobcat	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Coyote	21	19	20	23	20	26	25	20	32	32	34
Dog	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Eagle	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
Fox	2	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	1
Mountain Lion	1	--	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Wolf	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	--	1	--	1
Other Animals	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Unknown Predators	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
<b>Total Predators</b> <sup>1/</sup>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Non-Predators</b>											
Digestive	7	**	**	**	**	1	**	**	**	**	2
Internal Parasites	**	**	**	**	**	1	**	**	**	**	1
Respiratory	10	**	**	**	**	4	**	**	**	**	4
Metabolic	2	**	**	**	**	1	**	**	**	**	--
Other Diseases	3	**	**	**	**	3	**	**	**	**	1
<b>Total Diseases</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>
Lambing Complications	11	13	13	13	11	8	11	9	14	11	9
Old Age	8	7	6	6	7	5	6	4	6	7	7
On Back	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	--	1	1
Poison	2	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1
Theft	--	1	1	1	1	--	1	1	--	1	8
Weather Conditions	12	15	18	14	23	24	18	27	13	15	16
Other	3	5	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	1
<b>Total Non-Predators</b> <sup>1/</sup>	<b>59</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Unknown Causes</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Loss</b> <sup>1/</sup>	<b>100</b>										

<sup>1/</sup> Totals may not add due to rounding.

-- Denotes less than 1 percent.

\*\* Not Available.