

WDFW hoped shooting 5 wolves would stop attacks

Department spends \$134,999 on operation

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Washington wildlife managers hoped shooting five wolves in the Profanity Peak pack would end the attacks on livestock, but eventually killed seven when depredations continued, spending \$134,999 in the process, according to a report by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The report presented Friday summarizes WDFW's action's last year in the Colville National Forest in north-eastern Washington, where wolves attacked at least 10 cattle and probably killed at least five more.

Most of the information already had been reported, though WDFW previously had declined to disclose how many wolves it originally intended to shoot.

WDFW initially announced it would remove part of the pack. The mission grew into total pack removal when depredations continued, though four wolves were still alive when WDFW called off the hunt in mid-October.

The report also updates how the much the department spent. WDFW had preliminarily tallied the cost at \$119,500.

Most of the money, \$73,440, was spent on helicopters, while \$52,431 went for department salaries and equipment. WDFW also spent \$9,128 to hire a trapper for 11 days. Although the trapper did not capture any wolves, the hiring showed ranchers that WDFW was willing to go outside the department for help, according to the report.

The operation was the third time WDFW has shot wolves to protect livestock since 2012. WDFW hoped a lethal-control policy developed last spring by an advisory group that included ranchers and environmentalists would bolster public support for department actions.

Emotions, however, remained high. WDFW employees, ranchers and one member of the advisory group were threatened, according to the report.

Some environmental groups said they were outraged by the killing of wolves, especially on public lands. Ferry County officials and some ranchers said lethal control was overdue.

According to WDFW, the pack had a history of attacking livestock, and its territory overlapped 11 federal grazing allotments with 1,500 cow-calf pairs.

As the 2016 grazing season neared, however, WDFW was unable to track the pack. The pack's only member fitted with a radio-collar, an adult female, had moved to the south with a male wolf to form a new pack.

"With the approach of the summer grazing season, addressing that situation became a priority for WDFW wildlife managers," according to the report.

WDFW captured, collared and released an adult male June 9 and an adult female June 12. By then, cows were in the forest.

WDFW reported seeing cattle about 2 miles from where the female wolf was captured, but were not alarmed. The pack's previously known den was more than 10 miles away.

By the end of June, WDFW concluded the current den was actually 4 to 5 miles from where cattle had been released.

Washington State University Large Carnivore Conservation Lab Director Rob Wielgus told The Seattle Times in August that the Diamond M Ranch had intentionally released cows "on top" of the den. WSU administrators repudiated the comment, saying it was inaccurate and had contributed substantially to growing anger and confusion.

The first depredation was confirmed July 8. The rancher added a range rider and "ar-



Photos courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington wildlife managers examine a calf killed by wolves Aug. 3 in the Colville National Forest. This and other attacks led the state to shoot seven wolves.



The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recently issued a report detailing the decision to kill members of the Profanity Peak wolfpack.

to help monitor the cattle," according to WDFW.

On Aug. 3, WDFW confirmed a fourth depredation

by the pack, the threshold for considering lethal removal. The department confirmed a fifth attack the same day.

WDFW Director Jim Unsworth approved a recommendation by Eastern Washington Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera to shoot up to three adults and two pups, hoping that would be enough to stop the pack from feeding on cattle. At the time, WDFW believed the pack had 11 members, though the number was later revised to 12.

WDFW shot two adult female wolves Aug. 5 from a helicopter. WDFW also tried to trap and hunt for wolves on the ground, but were unable

to find anymore in the rugged timberlands in the following two weeks.

Unsworth called off the hunt Aug. 18 — more than two weeks after the last wolf attack. The next day, however, WDFW documented four depredations. Unsworth directed the department to try to kill the entire pack.

From a helicopter, WDFW shot one wolf Aug. 21 and three more Aug. 22, including an adult female that was found injured Aug. 25 and dispatched, according to the report. The seventh wolf was killed Sept. 27. The final confirmed attack on livestock was Oct. 3.

Progress made on Mexican potato access

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

DENVER — Potatoes USA officials say an "important and very positive step" has been taken in the industry's 15-year effort to gain access to all of Mexico for fresh U.S. potato shipments.

Precisely how significant the development will prove to be remains to be seen.

U.S. potato exports to Mexico have been allowed only within 16 miles of the U.S. border, except for a brief period in 2014 when the market was opened. Mexican courts granted an injunction against fresh U.S. potato shipments shortly after full access was granted, based on Mexican growers' claims that some phytosanitary issues had not been properly addressed. The restriction was reinstated and has remained in place since.

On Jan. 13, Mexico's agriculture department, called SAGARPA, published a pest risk assessment for U.S. potatoes and a sheet offering requirements for shipping fresh U.S. potatoes beyond the 16-mile zone. According to Potatoes USA, the publication will set the rules governing fresh U.S. potato shipments beyond

the 16-mile zone until a permanent decree is formalized, which should take 60 to 90 days.

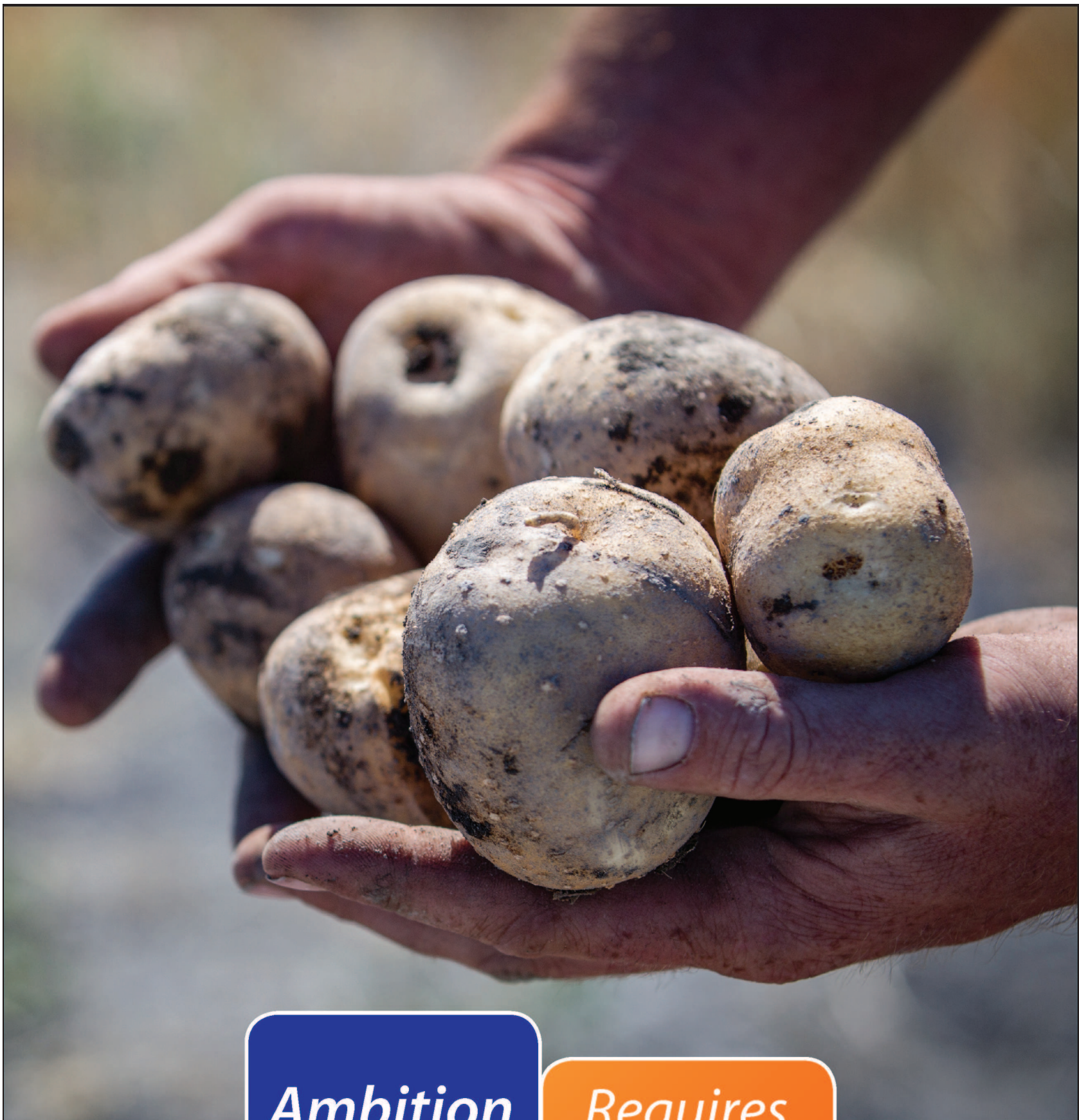
"Can people export? We don't know because the process by which that is to occur based on the document has not yet been clearly defined by the Mexicans," said Potatoes USA Chief Marketing Officer John Toasperm. "They made these publications, but they haven't sorted out the exact process."

Toasperm also offered the caveat that officials are still determining if the previous legal actions by Mexican potato growers will prevent further imports, and additional lawsuits could result in new injunctions against U.S. potato exports.

"It is very much in flux," Toasperm said.

Opening all of Mexico to fresh U.S. spuds would be a major victory for the U.S. potato industry.

Even with access restricted to within 16 miles of the border, Mexico is the second largest market for fresh U.S. potatoes. Toasperm said opening Mexico would also benefit Mexican consumers, who would enjoy a broader supply and variety of potatoes.



Ambition

Requires Vision

It's important to see things as they really are – and how they could be.

Ambition is knowing the seeds I'm planting today will create lasting value. It's working alongside those who share my vision.

My ambition is to build the best possible future for my family and me.



Rabo AgriFinance

855-722-7766 RaboAg.com

fb.com/RaboAg @RaboAg Rabo AgriFinance

Access to Financing | Knowledge | Networks