



WATER SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE THIS EDITION

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LIVING WITH WOLVES



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Time hasn't healed raw nerves created by predator's reintroduction in Idaho

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Most ranchers and farmers were howling mad when the federal government announced plans to reintroduce wolves in Idaho starting in 1995.

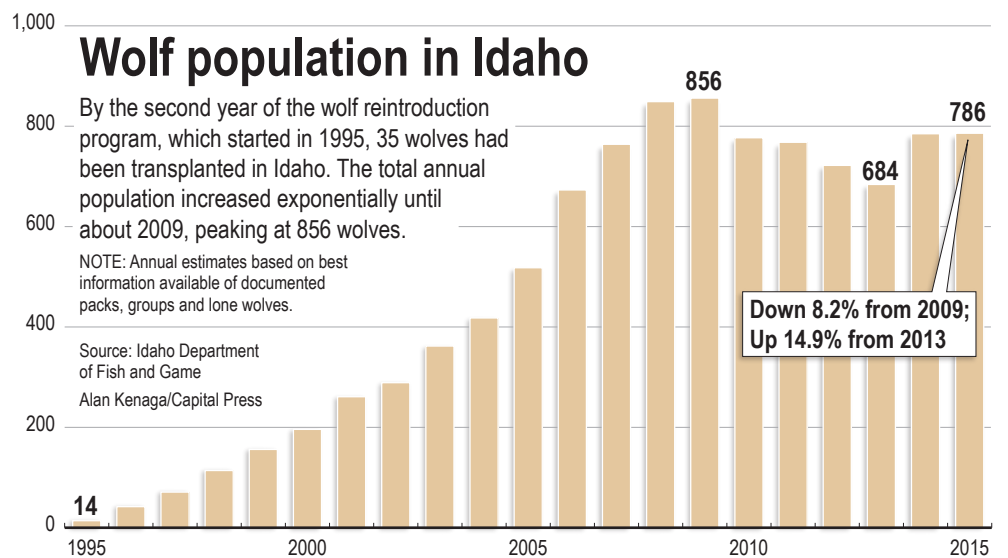
During standing-room-only public hearings on bringing the predators back to the state, “Almost to a person, rural Idaho said, ‘We don’t want wolves here,’” said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation spokesman John Thompson. “The federal government completely disregarded what those people in rural areas said.”

Twenty-three years later, that bitterness still remains — and so does the debate — over bringing wolves to Idaho.

The initial 35 gray wolves released during 1995 and 1996 in central Idaho came from Alberta, Canada. More wolves were also released to the east in Yellowstone National Park.

At first, Idaho wolf numbers skyrocketed, peaking at an estimated 856 in 2009 before subsiding to the current 700. In the meantime, the number of wolf depredations of livestock has stabilized.

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Farm groups back EPA motion to delay manure air rule

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Two national farm groups told a federal court Monday that puzzled producers need more time to understand how to calculate the volume of gas released each day by their livestock.

The National Pork Producers and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association filed a brief with the D.C. Circuit Court supporting the Environmental Protection Agency’s motion to put off the rule for three months.

“There continues to be significant confusion throughout the livestock in-

dustry with regard to these reporting requirements, especially among smaller producers who have less technical support,” wrote Pork Producers legal counsel Michael Formica in a court declaration.

The rule will require producers whose animals release at least 100 pounds of ammonia or hydrogen sulfide in a 24-hour period to register with the EPA and the Coast Guard’s National Response Center.

There is no generally accepted way to estimate emissions from decaying manure, according to the EPA, which said the rule was unnecessary and impractical.

The D.C. court, however, agreed with

environmental groups that having the information on file could be useful to emergency responders.

The EPA was waiting this week to see whether the D.C. court will finalize the reporting mandate or grant the agency more time to prepare producers. The EPA has released worksheets developed at universities to help farmers estimate emissions, but says there are too many climate, geographic and operational factors to say how many cows, pigs or chickens it takes to meet the reporting threshold.

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Alice Welch/USDA

Beef cattle in a feedlot near Medicine Park, Okla. Two national producer groups on Jan. 29 supported the Environmental Protection Agency’s motion seeking more time to prepare farmers to estimate and report the amount of gas released in a day by their livestock.

Legal opinion: Gene editing exempt from Europe’s GMO rules

Advisory ruling expected to be persuasive in gene editing policy

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Most gene editing techniques should not come under the Europe Union’s strict regulatory regime for genetically modified organisms, according to a preliminary legal opinion.

The opinion by an “advocate general” of

the European Court of Justice isn’t a binding legal decision, but it’s considered highly persuasive for the panel of judges who will issue a ruling on the matter this summer.

Advocates of biotechnology see the opinion as an early step in the right direction regarding Europe’s gene editing policy, but critics say it’s unlikely to sway wary European consumers.

“I think this is an opening volley in what will be a continuing debate in Europe,” said Jaydee Hanson, senior policy analyst with the Center for Food Safety, a nonprofit that wants stronger biotech regulations.

New gene editing techniques generally involve deleting specific genes or changing genetic sequences without inserting DNA from other organisms.

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USDA/Lance Cheung

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