LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD
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LIVESTOCK LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM
GRANT GUIDELINES
2-15-3111, MCA

Program Purpose. The Livestock Loss Board (LLB) has established a cost-share program to proactively implement measures to decrease the risk of wolf, grizzly bear, black bear, and mountain lion predation on livestock as authorized by the Montana Legislature pursuant to 2-15-3111, MCA. The LLB must prioritize grants for prevention of wolf and grizzly bear predation over those for black bear and mountain lion predation. 2-15-3110(6), MCA.

Program Funding. The livestock loss reduction prevention program is funded primarily by appropriations made by the Montana Legislature. Occasional grants have been received from federal agencies.

Eligible Applicants

1. Applicants must be either an individual or a corporation. 2-15-3111, MCA

2. Applicants must be actively and directly involved in the raising and marketing of the following types of livestock, their offspring, or products derived from the livestock in the regular course of business:
    a. cattle,
    b. bison,
    c. swine,
    d. horses,
    e. mules,
    f. sheep,
    g. goats, or
    h. llamas.

    In considering whether an applicant is actively and directly involved in a livestock production operation, the LLB shall take into account the number of livestock owned or leased by the applicant, the amount of land owned or leased by the applicant that is used in the applicant's livestock production operations, and whether the income generated by the applicant's livestock production operations is a significant portion of the applicant's total income. The LLB may request supplemental information from the applicant regarding these factors, and failure to provide such information is grounds to deny an application.

3. If an applicant has previously suffered livestock depredation from wolves, grizzlies, black bears, or mountain lions, the applicant must submit a summary of prior depredation(s) with the application.

4. The LLB, in its discretion, may consider other applicants, including:

    a. participants in youth agricultural programs, such as the Future Farmers of American (FFA) and 4-H; and
    b. non-profit corporations (including grazing associations) who will be partnering with or working on behalf of livestock producers. The livestock producers must meet the criteria set forth in paragraphs (1) through (3) above, must be identified in the non-profit corporation's application, and must submit an authorization signed by the participating producers on a form provided by the LLB.

Grant Applications and Requirements

1. Grant applications must use the forms provided by the LLB, which are available on its website.

2. Grant applications must be filled out completely and submitted by any deadlines set by the LLB. The LLB is not required to consider untimely or incomplete applications.

3. The land on which the predation prevention practices will occur and the livestock intended to be protected by those practices must be located in Montana. A map or legal description of the land must be submitted with the application. Based on its records of historic depredation losses, the LLB will categorize the land and livestock as being located in a high-risk depredation area, medium-risk depredation area, or low-risk depredation area.

4. A grant may not exceed 10% of the total value of the livestock that will be protected by the loss prevention project. The LLB will determine the value of the livestock based upon the type and number of livestock disclosed in the application form and the average market value of the livestock as determined using standard LLB practices.

Eligible Predation Loss Prevention Projects

1. All predation prevention practices proposed by an applicant must be a practice identified as an acceptable predation prevention practice in policies or publications issued by the LLB, USDA Wildlife Services, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, or other publications deemed appropriate by the LLB.

2. Any proposed predation prevention practices must be consistent with the terms of any conservation easements, leases, zoning, or land use restrictions applicable to the property upon which the loss prevention practices will be conducted. The LLB may request an applicant to provide any applicable conservation easements, leases, zoning, or land use restrictions. If a proposed predation prevention practice is consistent with the terms of any applicable conservation easements, leases, zoning, or land use restrictions, the existence of a conservation easement, lease, zoning, or land use restrictions may not be a grounds for disqualifying an application.

3. For applicants leasing state, tribal, or federal lands, applicants are responsible to ensure any predation prevention practices are permitted on state, tribal or federal lands and for compliance with their state, tribal or federal lease terms.

4. Any predation prevention activities proposed by the applicant, including carcass removal or composting of potentially diseased animals, must comply with applicable state, county, tribal, or federal laws and regulations.

5. In approving proposed electrical or other prevention fences that include a primary boundary fence bordering another landowner, the LLB must consider the impact on the adjoining landowner(s) and may seek the input of the adjoining landowner(s). All fencing proposals must meet the fencing requirements under Montana law, including 81-4-101, MCA.

6. For applicants seeking funding for expenses associated with guard dogs, those expenses may only include guard dog acquisition costs, standard veterinary examinations and vaccinations, food for the guard dogs while they are with the protected livestock, and other expenses incurred while the dogs are with the protected livestock. Expenses relating to the care of the guard dogs (including food and housing while the guard dogs are not with the protected livestock) may not be considered. The LLB or USDA Wildlife Services must verify the number of guard dogs located with the protected livestock. Expenses related to herding dogs are not allowed.

Matching Funds

1. MCA 2-15-3111 authorizes the LLB to require applicants to contribute to the cost of prevention measures, which may be payable in cash or in appropriate in-kind contributions by applicant, including labor to install or implement preventive measures.

2. Applicants applying for projects are required to provide 30% of the funds required to complete the project. If a project requires $1000 to complete, the applicant may request a grant of $700 and must provide $300 in funds or in-kind services for the project.

3. In-kind services, including labor to install or implement preventive measures, is considered in determining the applicant's match. Labor is currently valued at $25/hour. The applicant must provide a detailed description of any proposed in-kind services.

4. Use of equipment to install or implement preventive measures is considered in determining the applicant's match. The applicant must provide a detailed description of any in-kind equipment use. Rental rates shall be valued at the standard rental rates in the area where the livestock operation is located for the type of equipment to be used. If local rental rates are not readily available, the LLB may determine appropriate rental rates based on statewide or regional average rates for the type of equipment to be used.

5. Administrative costs may not be considered as in-kind matching funds (including but not limited to keeping records, filling out forms, and attending meetings).

6. The LLB, in its discretion, may adjust a cost-share because of extenuating circumstances related to chronic or multiple depredation incidents.

7. Applicants using a cash match from another source are required to provide proof that they received this cash and how this money is being used.

Application Process

1. The LLB will provide public notice of timelines for the submission of predator prevention grant applications for each grant cycle as determined by the LLB. The LLB shall consider the timing of availability of funding (including receipt of state and federal funds) in determining grant cycles.

2. The LLB and LLB program manager, will review and consider all submitted grants within 45 days of the close of the submission period. The screening panel may seek additional information from grant applications in the review process.

3. The LLB will consider the following criteria in considering applications for predation prevention grant applications:

    a. Whether the land and the livestock proposed to be protected by the grant are located in a high-risk, medium-risk, or low-risk predation area, as determined by the LLB based on statewide historic predation losses;
    b. The predation loss history of the applicant (or, for non-profit organization applicants partnering or working on behalf of livestock producers, the loss history of those producers);
    c. The number of livestock to be protected;
    d. The number of acres to be covered;
    e. The effectiveness of proposed prevention measures;
    f. The cost of the prevention measures;
    g. Any other criteria considered to be relevant by the LLB (e.g. range rider 1099s).

4. The LLB program manager will review each application for completeness and will work with those submitting incomplete applications to remedy deficiencies. The LLB has developed a scoring matrix, weighting and applying scoring criteria in a consistent manner to all applicants.

5. The LLB will review the application scores of the LLB program manager and will make final determinations in awarding grants to the applicants. The LLB is not bound by the recommendations of the LLB program manager.

6. If the LLB does not award all funds available in that funding cycle, it may proceed with another round of applications.

Reporting

1. Within 12 months of receiving a grant award, a grant recipient must provide a written report to the LLB providing an accounting of the applicant's use of grant funds, a record of in-kind funds or contributions (including receipts and payroll records), and its analysis of whether the prevention practices implemented by the grant recipient reduced predation losses. For example, the analysis may include reports of a reduced number of predators seen in the area and the number of incidents when guard dogs or fences averted conflict. All reports must include the number of any livestock predations that occurred while the prevention practices were in place. If the grant recipient has had livestock losses in the past, the report should contain a comparison of past annual losses to current losses.

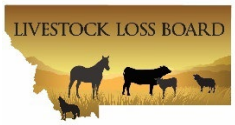
   Grants issued for range riders are required to provide a daily log listing if grizzly bears, wolves, black bears, or mountain lions were seen in person (does not include game camera information).

   All reports must state the prevention dollars spent per head and a breakdown of the amount of time involved on a per head basis.

   Interim reports may be requested by the board as the board deems necessary to ensure compliance with grant activities.

2. Failure of a grant recipient to comply with these reporting requirements will prevent the applicant from applying for a grant for a period of three years.

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SUMMARY OF GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

- Recipients must be livestock producers (or a group of producers). May also be an ag youth organization (4-H, FFA, etc.) or a non-profit (including grazing associations) working on behalf of livestock producers.
    - If working on behalf of other producers, each producer must submit a Loss Prevention Grant Supplement with the application.
- The project must protect cattle, bison, swine, horses, mules, sheep, goats, or llamas from depredations caused by wolves, grizzly bears, black bears or mountain lions.
- Total grant award may not exceed 10% of the value of livestock to be protected (this is calculated by LLB using standard valuation practices).
- Prevention practices must be identified as acceptable in Livestock Loss Board (LLB), USDA Wildlife Services, MT FWP publications or policies (or other publications approved by the LLB).
    - Common practices funded have included range riding, carcass composting, fencing, fladry, and livestock guardian dog purchase/support.
    - Prevention practices must comply with land use restrictions (such as conservation easements, leases, zoning, etc.) and with federal, state, and local laws.
    - Administrative costs cannot exceed 10% of total funding and may not exceed $25/hour.
- Livestock and land must be located in Montana.
- The LLB will verify that grant applicants have paid per capita fees prior to awarding a grant.
    - Tribal members must verify animal numbers using approved third-party verification.
- Livestock guard dog expenses are limited to:
    - Purchase costs (up to $500 per dog),
    - Standard veterinary exams and vaccinations,
    - Food and other costs incurred while the dogs are protecting livestock.
- Priority is given to applicants with a history of depredation by wolves, grizzly bears, black bears or mountain lions.
- Applicants must supply a 30% match.
    - Match funding may include cash or in-kind services (such as labor or equipment).
    - Labor may not be valued over $25/hour.
    - Administrative costs may not be used as in-kind match funding.
- Grant recipients must provide a written report to the LLB within 12 months of receiving an award.
    - Grant recipients who fail to provide adequate reports will not be eligible to reapply for a period of three years.