

Final Project Report

Grant Award Number: F22AP0019

Recipient Grant Identifier Number: 804886208

Recipient Name: Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Grant title: Minnesota Wolf-Livestock Conflict Prevention Grants

Start Date: September 1, 2021

End Date: August 31, 2022

Comparison of planned accomplishments with actual:

Anticipated: We anticipated funding 10-15 projects worth a total of \$60,000 in granted funds. In this round of grants, producers were required to make a 20% cost-share, so the total expected value of wolf depredation prevention projects was expected to be about \$75,000. We also planned to spend about \$7,500 on salary/fringe and \$1,958 on indirect costs for the project. For selecting projects to fund, we planned to use a similar process to past years with a multi-agency/organization panel evaluating and selecting projects using these criteria:

Evaluation Item	0 points	2.5 Points	5 Points	10 Points
Documented livestock killed by wolf	No documented damage within last 5 years	Documented damage within last 2-5 years	Documented damage within last 1-2 years	Documented damage within last year
Completeness of application	Not legible, hard to read and/or understand	Everything is filled out and readable	Detailed description of plans and itemized costs	NA
Demonstrated knowledge	No demonstrated knowledge of how to implement plan	Some knowledge of tactics demonstrated	Clearly sufficient knowledge to implement plan	NA
Effectiveness of tactics	Plan appears insufficient	Plan may or may not succeed	Plan is likely to succeed	NA
Cost efficiency	Costs are clearly too high for the proposed project	Costs may be high	Costs appear in line with proposed project	NA
Emerging Farmer	Add 5 points if qualifying factors are documented			
Previous Wolf-Livestock Grant funds received	Subtract 1 point per \$1,000 previously received			

Actual:

Timeline:

- The availability of grants was announced on November 8, 2021: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grant-money-available-minnesota-livestock-owners-prevention-wolf-attacks>.
- Applications were accepted through January 24, 2022.
- Due to the availability of state funds for non-lethal prevention measures, we were able to require only a 20% producer cost-share.

- 26 applications requesting a total of \$226,334 were received which was nearly identical to the response to the previous year's grant program.
- Applications were ranked by a panel comprised of MDA, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota Cattlemen and Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers.
- The panel met to review the applications and select projects for funding on March 8, 2022.
- Sixteen projects were selected for funding at a total amount of \$63,672 in grant funds, or \$79,890 in total project dollars including producer cost-share.
- Thirteen grantees ultimately entered into contracts with the State and commenced projects.
- Three projects that were selected for funding ultimately did not complete contracts with the department:
 - One grantee elected not to conduct the project after being advised against using donkeys as guard animals by a donkey rescue (\$2,400).
 - Two other grantee's ceased communications with the department before completing an agreement (\$5,720).
 - By the time the Department realized that these entities would not complete projects there was not sufficient time to grant the dollars to others.
- Eleven projects spending \$50,509 in Federal funds and \$12,439 in cooperator funds were completed by August 31, 2022 and documentation submitted.
 - Four of the completed projects came in under budget resulting in \$3,923 that were granted but not spent.
- Two projects were not completed because grantees were unable to find guard dogs for purchase within the project timeframe resulting in an additional \$1,120 in granted funds not spent.

Budget:

- We spent \$7,646 on staff time and \$1,812 on indirect costs which is line with our proposed budget for the project.
- We allocated \$63,672 to make grants to livestock producers, which was slightly more than estimated. Based on past experience we expected some projects to come in under budget. However, we did not anticipate that we would continue to have issues with producers deciding not to pursue projects for which they had been chosen to receive grant funds.
- Due to that grantee's that did ultimately did not enter into the contracts we offered, grantee's who were unable to complete their projects and projects that came in under budget, only \$50,509 of the federal funds available were spent on projects. Producers completing projects did spend an additional \$12,439 of their own funds.
- In addition to the producer's match, we were able to use \$48,968 in State dollars to support USDA APHIS Wildlife Services to provide non-lethal prevention assistance to producers. This is an important partnership to provide livestock producers with knowledgeable assistance for conflict prevention measures as well as to check on progress of grant projects.

Discussion:

As described above, three projects worth a total of \$8,120 never made it to a completed grant agreement. This is frustrating for the department as significant time is generally spent trying to get the agreements completed and by the time that we are forced to write off the attempt there is not sufficient time for another livestock producer to complete a project. The timing of these projects has been an ongoing concern for producers. Generally, any project involving barriers or other structures

cannot be completed until the weather allows. Unfortunately, producers are busy most of the growing season with calving/lambing and forage production. We frequently hear from producers that having project run longer into the fall would be helpful for getting them completed.

A small amount of grant funds were not utilized due to difficulties finding guard dogs. We also hear that producers have difficulty finding donkeys at times.

Eleven projects were completed on time and within budget. Project managers submitted short reports on the outcomes of their projects and were generally pleased with the process and optimistic about the impact (Table 1).

Table 1. List of funded projects with results

County	Project	\$ Granted	\$ Spent	\$ Matched	Past depredation issues*	Challenges with this project*	Will this project help?*
Aitkin	Guard dog, Vet care, Fencing	\$3,620	\$3,620	\$905	We have heard the wolves at night and have seen them a couple times. They have not yet attacked our sheep. I think our two guard dogs help.	None with grant process. Increased prices were a bit of a problem.	Definitely, I am very pleased with our new fence.
Mille Lacs	Guard dog, Fencing, vet care	\$7,141	\$7,141	\$2,057	In the past we have had problems with wolves killing calves and cows. We have had the trapper out several times over many years and it works for that moment. The wolves will move on after a few of them have been trapped but they will always be around. My hope is that with this project I will be able to have the dogs with the calves more to help protect them from the wolves and push the wolves onto other food sources other than the livestock.	I think the grant application process is set up perfect. The application process starts at a perfect time of year so that we are notified and can start working on the project in the spring. I wish there was more money available for these projects as I believe a project such as mine will work. One suggestion I would add is give more time to finish the projects.	Yes, I think having these dogs running around barking all night will keep the wolves at a distance. The problems I see with this is that the wolves will wait for the calves to get out of the area the dogs have access to or just go to the next farm and do damage there. If we are going to coexist with the wolves, I think having funding to help offset the cost of projects such as this is necessary otherwise people will take the easy way out and just shoot the wolves.
Itasca	3 donkeys, Cattle panels	\$10,221	\$8,025	\$2,196	Lost almost all lambs and 15 ewes in 2021. The cattle panels are replacing the 4 strands	No challenges with application process. My biggest challenge was supply issues and inflated prices on gates. Also not being able to	I do believe this new fencing will reduce future wolf-livestock conflict due to not

Kanabec	Guard dog, Vet care	\$640	\$0	\$0	of barb wire to prevent entrance into pasture. Project not completed. The grantee was unable to locate a guard dog for purchase.	find donkeys that are sheep / cattle friendly.	being able to get in fenced area.
Carlton	Vet care and fencing	\$2,330	\$2,330	\$725	First, we live peacefully and coexist with the wolves. The simple fact that they are re-listed tells us why. The wolf grant allows us to create multi-layer protection systems for our cattle: fences, wolf protection dogs, electric wire, etc. We see wolves but have reduced losses from them.	No. Seamless front to back. Great folks to work with! NiCole is A+	Yes. Again, multi-layer protection systems. We use to calve in the open, now we calve in a wolf-deterrent fence, under cover, and under the watchful eye of cattle protection dogs. We live with trumpeter swans, eagles, wolves, coyotes, deer, etc. In this environment we successfully raise calves!
Pine	Mule and vet care	\$2,400	\$0	\$0	Grant was ultimately turned down after the producer was advised against using mules or donkeys by a donkey rescue center. As mentioned in our application, we have not had any wolf depredations that we are aware of. However, this is largely due to the fact that we keep our livestock well-protected.		
Mille Lacs	2 guard dogs, vet care and fencing	\$2,680	\$2,680	\$670	This grant allowed us to build more wolf-resistant fencing and fund the purchase of livestock guardian dogs. The combination of LGDs and electric fencing should be strong deterrents against wolves.	The application process was simple and easy to complete, thanks for making this a smooth process.	Yes, by securing more of our pasture with multi-strand high tensile fence and adding livestock guardian dogs, I believe we are well-situated to minimize wolf interaction.

St Louis	Fencing and vet care	\$2,130	\$1,942	\$486	Early calves can be kept safe in building with water when young and vulnerable.	The drought made for a lot more working having to haul water, find enough grazing and secure more land to put up hay. It has been a busy and stressful summer, but no real problems with grant process.	Yes, it should. Early calves should be secure.
Pine	Fencing	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$3,013	I think that the last 8-9 years we have had confirmed wolf kills on our cattle. The hope is that by putting the woven fence around our perimeter the wolves will move on and bypass our cattle.	I had no issues with the process. NiCole Rawski has always been helpful and there with the answers when I needed them. As far as completing the project, 6 miles of woven fence to complete was a lot of work. I'm glad it's done.	I hope so. I think it will. It keeps the calves with the cows at all times making it tough for the wolves to separate them. I think the wolves will avoid jumping or digging most of the time Not 100% effective but definitely deter them.
Pine	Guard dog	\$480	\$0	\$0	Unable to find a suitable guard dog during project		
Wadena	Lighting and alarms	\$920	\$0	\$0	The applicant dropped out of communication before a grant contract was completed.		
Crow Wing	Fencing and lights	\$3,264	\$3,224	\$807	We have been fortunate to not have any wolf predation with our livestock due in part to measures taken to reduce conflict such as calving shelters, secure fences and human presence during calving season.	1) The grant application and agreement went smoothly 2) Completion of the project had a few setbacks with delays in availability of material we planned to use. In some cases, we substituted similar products. Others became available near the project deadline. 3) In the actual installation of fencing material, we realized some additional accessories were necessary to make an efficient system. This included electric fence wire for greater reach of the	Yes! We feel we have taken great measures to make this project predator proof as well as an economic success. It has given us reason to really research methods and materials and collaborate with other producers in similar situations. We feel fortunate to be able to receive this funding.

						electric netting, electric spring gates, and cable connections for ease of set up and portability.	
Pine	Donkeys	\$4,000	\$2,500	\$0	We have lost 8 head of cattle. The last one was a cow in 2020 and a very exceptional quality bull calf in 2019. Our cow herd loses weight coming home a mile every night due to wolf harassment. They never can settle in one place. Putting up woven wire and other strong fence might help reduce future depredation. Donkeys help, but can't be everywhere all the time. We hear wolves howling every night back in our pastures.	I didn't have any trouble with any part of the process. It was a little bit challenging trying to find donkeys for sale.	I don't believe this will reduce future wolf-livestock conflict. If wolves want to get to our livestock, they will find a way. The only way it is going to be reduced is getting the wolves off the protected list and taking care of more of them. Having hunting seasons with larger numbers that hunters can shoot. I have heard there are 3000 wolves in Minnesota, but I think we should double that and we would be closer.
Carlton	Fencing	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$500	The wolves that came through our farm are very brave. They lights you helped me purchase before seem to help some. The fencing this project assisted with will definitely help keep newborn calves safer!	No	Yes, definitely
Clay	Paddock and donkey	\$4,800	\$0	\$0		The applicant dropped out of communication before a grant contract was completed.	
Pennington - Bob	Shelter	\$5,046	\$5,046	\$1,261	Wolves have been a problem killing vulnerable newborn calves. This project provides a secure shelter	No, it went fairly well.	It should provide protection for calves when they are the most vulnerable.

where the cow may care
for her newborn in a safe
secure environment.

*From reports submitted by grantee's