

# Predation in Perspective

There is a prejudice among certain farmers toward wolves as the cause of their livestock losses. Wolves are usually blamed if their tracks have been seen in or near the pasture, if howling has been heard, or if neighbors have claimed wolf depredations in the recent past. Another possible reason for implicating wolves is that compensation can be obtained for livestock killed by them, whereas none is available for losses by other predators (including coyotes) or from other causes .

Many ranches have brush or forested areas, and when a livestock dies in such an area, there is little chance for the farmer to find the body. As a result, predation is often assumed, but rarely supported by evidence. In one season in Minnesota, 76% of the cattle reported as having been killed by wolves were cattle that could not be accounted for.

Causes of death among cows and calves in the U.S. in 1992:

Respiratory ailments - 30%

Digestive failures - 21%

Unknown - 16%

Calving problems - 14%

Weather - 7%

**Predators - 2%**

[www.wtbf.com/media\\_center/photo\\_gallery/Cow%20with%20calf.jpg](http://www.wtbf.com/media_center/photo_gallery/Cow%20with%20calf.jpg)



[www.co.clinton.ny.us/images/Photos/StormOverFarm.jpg](http://www.co.clinton.ny.us/images/Photos/StormOverFarm.jpg)

Over 1 500 wolves live in cattle country in Alberta. Nonetheless, between 1974 - 1991, only an average of **1%** of livestock losses each year were due to wolves.

Causes of death among cows and calves in Montana in 2000:

**Wolves - 2**

Other predators - 18 900

Non-predators (especially poisonous plants, weather, disease, and calving) - 66 000



[www.ece.ubc.ca/~ianc/Botanie1/DSCN9696e.JPG](http://www.ece.ubc.ca/~ianc/Botanie1/DSCN9696e.JPG)