

February 11, 2013

### **WILDLIFE DAMAGE EXPERT HIRED**

I introduced Ricky Woods at the Wilber Crop Clinic to area farmers and landowners last week as the new wildlife biologist for Saline County. Ricky was hired mid-budget year by Saline County to help solve a coyote concentration problem in the center of the county with livestock losses being noted by certain landowners. He mentioned to me harvesting over 20 coyote in a small area this winter in the middle part of the county.

At the Crop Clinic he said he was available to landowners in the county for assistance with problems such as coyote, woodchuck and other wildlife damage issues. His contact information is cell phone 402-450-5377 or e-mail woods@aphis.usda.gov. Ricky lives in Denton in Lancaster County and said his current contract in Saline County is for six months. So this is a trial phase for the county with these kinds of services to the public.

The mission of USDA APHIS Wildlife Services is to provide Federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. Wildlife biologists conduct program delivery, research, and other activities through Regional and State Offices, the National Wildlife Research Center and its Field Stations, as well as through its National Programs. Program biologists apply the integrated wildlife damage management approach to provide technical assistance and direct management operations in response to requests for assistance. APHIS research scientists are dedicated to the development of wildlife damage management methods.

The program's efforts help people resolve wildlife damage to a wide variety of resources and to reduce threats to human health and safety. Funding for the program is a combination of Federal appropriations and cooperator-provided funds. The wildlife biologist will develop Annual Program Data Reports to provide the public with information about its wildlife damage management activities.

Wildlife Service personnel caution the public about feeding wildlife. They encourage you to avoid feeding wildlife such as ducks, geese, gulls, raccoons, deer, squirrels or coyotes. One way you can help reduce wildlife conflicts with people is by not feeding wildlife near human populations and in parks. Human food is not healthy for wild animals and they do not need food from humans to survive. Wild animals have specialized diets and they can become malnourished or die if fed the wrong foods. Also, animals cannot distinguish food from wrappers or foil and can get sick eating these items.

Feeding leads to public health concerns. Too many animals in one place increases the chance of disease transmission to people and among other wildlife. Animals accustomed to people often lose their fear of people and can become aggressive. Those that become too aggressive may have to be destroyed to protect people and property.



So the bottom line is don't feed wild animals and when populations build up on their own too high and are doing damage to your land, buildings or livestock, assistance is now available which is new for Saline County.

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