

Predator control bylaw proposed

General Government Services Committee has received a draft of a new predator control bylaw that reflects much of what Dufferin Federation of Agriculture President Bill McCutcheon had said he would expect to be included.

In particular, the bylaw appears to have adequate safeguards to avoid inadvertent slaughter of innocent wild animals. It was drafted by county staff in consultation with the federation.

In short, the hunting or trapping of coyotes would be done as quickly as possible after a livestock kill, and then only for a short time and within a restricted distance of the kill.

These are generally similar to safeguards previously practiced. The principal difference between the old bylaw and the proposed new one is that the Ministry of Natural Resources is no longer involved in predator control. Now the county has the authority and bears the cost.

As in the past, however, the county and/or local municipality would be reimbursed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for payments made for the livestock killed by predators.

Under the new control bylaw as presented to the committee, the cause of the death of livestock would be determined by an evaluator. According to a provincial government web page, there are unmistakable clues as to whether the death was caused by dogs or by wild predators, and also whether the dead animal was killed by a predator or died of natural causes, even if scavengers had been feeding on it.

When it has been determined that the death is by predation, the owner is free to hire a licensed hunter or trapper once authorization has been obtained from the county.

And then the hunt would be confined to a 5 kilometre radius from the site of the kill, and only for four weeks.

Ears from the coyote would be submitted for payment along with the prescribed application form. Payment recommended would be \$50 per animal to a maximum of 10 predators in any one claim.

The county and federation do not desire, and the county hasn't provided for, wholesale slaughter of coyotes. The county's 2014 budget provides for total payments of \$2,500, according to the report.

By Wes Keller