



The two most common causes of healthy livestock loss

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Oftentimes you hear the term, ‘survival of the fittest’, as nature tends to eliminate the weak animals, and a ranch or farms are no exception.

Livestock loss is a major concern to a farmer, as they directly impact income.

It is worrisome for a ranch owner to hear six kids, lambs and calves were eaten. Moreover, mature cattle, sheep and goats also succumb to predation.

Let’s see how to **minimize predation and thefts** on your farms.

Livestock theft and predation: a major concern

These are the most **common predators** in southern african regions:

- Jackals
- Leopards
- Hyenas
- Wild dogs
- Snakes
- Coyotes



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As for “**human predators**”, a series of theft cases are often reported by farmers every year. Sometimes thieves are caught or they go unnoticed. This results in stress not only to the farmer but a nursing dame; cow, doe, or ewe.

How to prevent livestock theft and predation

- **Kraaling of livestock at night** has since shown to reduce predation. Hence, easy counting of livestock, a [management tool](#) often practiced.
- **Paddocks** play a crucial role, in the sense that a farmer is fully aware of which section a herd is grazing at, and likely predators.
- [Appropriate fencing](#) can help reduce theft, and help with livestock management. Through consultation, farmers can be guided on the type of fencing to be used, in order to minimize predation.
- **Tracking footprints** of predators can help a farmer know which predator lurks frequently on a ranch.
- Organizing **farmers’ day with neighboring farmers** could facilitate sharing of ideas on how to minimize predation.
- Modern ranches, make use of [digital tracking tools](#) which record activities around a specific area. Therefore, use of smart technology makes farming enjoyable.
- **Security on a farm** is essential in order to prevent theft of livestock, machinery and feed. Therefore, locking up after a busy day is ideal
- **Use of herding dogs** is essential on ranches as it safeguards grazing livestock. For example the Anatolian Shepherd. **Also roosters** are vital in free-range flocks, as male birds act as guardians, through giving warning sounds to the others (hens and chicks).
- Use of **snake repellents** and specific plants, which help deter snakes.



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- **Taking care of neonates**, especially when the mature adults are out grazing during the day. This management practice is in agreement with animal welfare. In doing so, predation is minimized.

In conclusion, predation and thievery pose a threat to livestock and this affects overall profit on the farm. Therefore, strategic measures ought to be put in place, to ensure success of the farm and avoid livestock loss.

References

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