

2018 OFA Today – wildlife compensation

[head] Wildlife damage compensation

[subhead] OMAFRA updated the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program in 2017 – know your eligibility requirements, responsibilities, government responsibilities and where to go for more information.

Ontario's Wildlife Damage Compensation Program provides financial compensation to producers whose livestock, poultry or honey bees are damaged or killed by wildlife. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) recently reviewed the program and OFA encourages all members to make sure they are aware of key eligibility requirements for compensation and their responsibilities as Ontario farmers to prevent and manage wildlife damage.

[subhead] Ontario's Wildlife Damage Compensation Program responsibilities – who does what?

Producers are responsible for:

- Demonstrating reasonable care of livestock, poultry, beehives, bee colonies and beehive-related equipment in relation to the prevention of predation
- Notifying their municipality within 48 hours of discovering the injury or death of livestock or poultry, or discovering damage to beehives, a bee colony and/or beehive-related equipment
- Preserving the injury or kill site and carcass (or carcasses) until the municipal or territorial investigator has investigated
- Disposing of all dead livestock and poultry in a manner that is acceptable under the Ontario Regulation 106/09 of the *Nutrient Management Act*

Municipalities are responsible for:

- Appointing municipal investigators
- Reviewing and submitting completed applications and any additional evidence to OMAFRA's program administrator
- Paying an owner's approved application, in accordance with the program guidelines and values assigned by the program administrator
- Providing Statement of Farm Support Payments to owners who receive compensation
- Paying and reimbursing municipal investigators

The municipal or territorial investigator is responsible for:

- Carrying out a full and impartial investigation within 72 hours of receiving the notification of the injury or death of livestock or poultry
- Taking three to six colour photos per eligible kill/injury incurred and collecting all necessary information to accurately complete the application
- Municipal investigators are responsible for providing a completed program application to the owner and municipality within seven business days of completing an investigation
- The municipal investigator has no role in setting a value on the dead/injured livestock

The bee investigator is responsible for:

- Carrying out a full and impartial investigation with three business days of receiving notification of the damage to a beehive, bee colonies and/or beehive-related equipment

- Providing a completed program application to the owner and OMAFRA's program administrator within seven business days of completing an investigation

OMAFRA is responsible for:

- Appointing investigators for territories without a municipal organization
- Posting the standardized pricing table containing the fair market values for all eligible livestock and poultry, and updating the table on a regular basis
- Reviewing applications to determine eligibility and assigning values based on the evidence provided
- Providing the owner with a written decision within 30 business days of receiving a complete application, reviewing and assessing appeals
- Reimbursing municipalities (plus a \$30 admin fee per application) in accordance with the program guidelines

[boxed copy] **Wildlife compensation eligibility requirements**

Producer eligibility requirements:

- Have a valid premises ID (PID) number for the farm property where the damage or kill occurred
- Have a valid Farm Business Registration (FBR) Number
- Demonstrate reasonable care of livestock, poultry and bees
- Ensure availability of evidence that damage/death caused by predation

Eligible Damages

- Eligible livestock/poultry killed by an eligible predator
- Vet costs for eligible livestock/poultry injured by an eligible predator
- Bee hives, bee colonies and/or beehive-related equipment damaged by an eligible predator

Eligible predators

Eligible wildlife species for damage to livestock and poultry

- Bear
- Bobcat
- Cougar
- Coyote
- Crow
- Eagle
- Elk
- Fisher
- Fox
- Hawk
- Lynx
- Mink
- Raccoon

- Raven
- Turkey vulture
- Weasel
- Wolf

Eligible wildlife species for damage to honey bees

- Bear
- Deer
- Raccoon
- Skunk