

## RESOLUTION E1-22

### PROHIBIT RECREATIONAL HUNTING OF WILD BOAR AT LARGE IN ALBERTA

- WHEREAS:** Wild boar at large have been spotted in twenty eight (28) counties in Alberta, and also in Elk Island National Park;
- WHEREAS:** Wild boar at large are recognized as one of the most destructive invasive species capable of causing significant damage to crops, pastures and to the environment;
- WHEREAS:** Wild boar at large pose a significant threat to livestock, humans, pets and wildlife as they are vectors for a variety of diseases, including reportable diseases such as foot and mouth disease;
- WHEREAS:** Wild boar at large alter ecosystems through contaminating water sources, promoting erosion, destroying habitat and consuming eggs of ground-nesting birds;
- WHEREAS:** Hunting wild boar at large is an ineffective control method as populations scatter and quickly learn to avoid humans making them more difficult to manage and often exacerbating the problem

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

#### THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

That Alberta Agriculture Forestry & Rural Economic Development prohibit the recreational hunting of wild boar at large and require that populations be reported and professionally controlled through the removal of entire sounders.

- SPONSORED BY:** Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
- MOVED BY:**
- SECONDED BY:**
- CARRIED:**
- DEFEATED:**
- STATUS:**
- DEPARTMENT:** Alberta Agriculture, Forestry & Rural Economic Development

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Wild boar were brought to Saskatchewan and Alberta in the 1990's to diversify agriculture. Some escaped and established feral populations. Between 2008 and 2017, a wild boar-at-large ear bounty program awarded approximately \$50,000 for about one thousand (1000) confirmed kills. During the last year of the bounty program in Alberta, only a handful of ears were turned in. Despite the bounty program, reports of wild boar continue to increase annually and as a result it has become widely accepted that non-professional hunting can make it more difficult for organized control efforts.

Since the conclusion of the bounty program in 2017, the province has publicly discouraged recreational hunting in favour of the professional removal of entire sounders through the Wild Boar at Large

Eradication Program. This program is a collaboration between Alberta Pork and Alberta Agriculture Forestry and Rural Economic Development. Technicians track the animals using reports from the public, trail cameras and drones to remove entire groups (or sounders) using remotely monitored corral traps. This program is the first of its kind in Canada and aligns with recommendations from researchers that entire sounder removal is the only effective means of controlling this species.

Furthermore the Alberta Invasive Species Council recently launched the “Squeal on Pigs” campaign to encourage the reporting of all sightings of wild boar and to discourage recreational hunting. This outreach campaign is a collaboration between the Alberta Invasive Species Council, numerous municipalities across Alberta, other non-governmental organizations, and industry groups such as Alberta Pork and the Alberta Beef Producers. It is intended to raise awareness of the negative impacts of wild boar at large, discourage hunting as a control option and encourage the public to report signs and sightings so they can be sent to the wild boar at large eradication program.

Moreover, recreational hunting has the potential to incentivize the conservation and support of wild boar populations based on conceivable financial gains for offering the opportunity. An increase in the population of wild boar at large increases the potential for disease transmission to domestic livestock. An outbreak of disease such as Foot and Mouth disease could cripple both Alberta’s pork and beef industries and prevent producers from accessing international markets for extended periods of time. This disruption would be devastating to producers, and some may not financially recover.

Jurisdictions which have successfully eradicated wild boar at large banned recreational hunting early on in their eradication plans. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation of New York State, wild boar have been successfully eliminated from six counties. Their eradication program was based on the following legislated actions:

- As of October 2013, it is illegal to import, breed or release Eurasian boars in NYS.
- As of April 2014, it is illegal to hunt or trap free-ranging Eurasian boars in NYS.
- As of September 2015, it is illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade or transport Eurasian boars in NYS.

As of January 1, 2022, it will be illegal to hunt wild boar at large recreationally in the province of Ontario.

Alberta Agriculture Forestry and Rural Economic Development must recognize the threat wild boar at large pose to the pork and beef industries and to the environment. More robust regulations are required to eradicate wild boar at large and prevent the further spread into other jurisdictions. The prohibition of recreational hunting is critical to the success of an eradication strategy focused on capturing and removing entire sounders.