Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards for North America

Certified Wildlife Friendly™ is a program of the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network

1. Program Mission
The Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards for North America recognize wildlife stewardship on farm and ranch lands. Participating producers employ a mix of proactive practices and careful observation, and adapt their management in response to changing conditions to allow wildlife and livestock to coexist. Participants value the ability of their operations to serve as habitat for wildlife, including predators and other key species.

Key species are defined as those on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and other species that play a critical functional role in the ecosystem and those important in a local context (see Annex 1 for full definition.)

The Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards may be applied to land management practices as well as livestock management. Products that result from the application of these practices are eligible to bear the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ seal. These goods and livestock include:

- Meats: Beef, pork, bison, lamb, chicken, goat, turkey, duck, goose, emu, ostrich & game birds
- Raw wool, felted wool, wool yarn, wool thread, woolen clothing and woolen piece goods
- Animal fiber yarn & goods made from Angora rabbits, Angora goats, bison, dogs, alpaca, guanaco, vicuna, donkeys, llamas, camels & yaks
- Breeding stock
- Leather goods: Sheepskins, cowhide, emu & ostrich
- Dairy products: Milk, cheese, yoghurt, sour cream, butter
- Eggs
- Honey
- Soaps & lotion made from animal by-products

Agricultural lands function within and interact with the surrounding ecosystem. Because of this, management decisions made by agricultural producers affect local and regional biodiversity. By managing for predator conservation and habitat, Certified Wildlife Friendly™ operations support wildlife, biodiversity, and a host of other ecosystem services for public benefit.

The Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards are voluntary. These standards do not supersede national or state legislation.
2. Standards

Section I. Farm and Ranch Characteristics

The farm or ranch provides habitat used by native wildlife for feeding, breeding, socializing, hunting or passage. Predators need not be resident, yet producers must provide sufficient habitat such that predators and prey have opportunity to make use of the property. Equally, producers must protect livestock from predators and not allow livestock, feed or other farm attributes to serve as an attractant to wildlife.

1.0 Definition of Farms and Ranches that may be certified

1.0.1 Native wildlife must exist on the farm or ranch or in the area surrounding the farm or ranch.

1.0.2 The property must allow passage of native wildlife, including predators and their prey.

1.0.3 The property must provide usable habitat for native wildlife, including predators and their prey.

*Note: Useable habitat may be determined by historic use, or by comparable properties.*

1.0.4 Management practices must be in place to minimize the potential for conflict with livestock.

1.0.5 Management practices must be in place to minimize attractants to wildlife.

1.0.6 Producers must exhibit sufficient understanding of wildlife use and ecology to allow for the use of adaptive management in response to changing predation risk.

1.0.7 Key species must be protected.

*Note: Key species include species such as beavers, raptors, and prairie dogs as well as predators which have generally been treated as agricultural pests, such as coyotes. See Annex 1 for more details on key species.*

1.1. Farm and Ranch Management Practices

1.1.1 All animals managed on any one property, or on contiguous lands (whether owned or leased) must be raised according to the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards.

1.1.2 Producers who maintain separate livestock herds on two or more non-contiguous properties (owned or leased) may certify the flocks or herds on properties which are managed according to Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards, and also maintain non-certified flocks or herds on properties which do not meet the standards. Such division of the producer’s livestock into certified and non-certified flocks or herds is permissible only if:

1.1.2.1 The certified flock or herd resides on the property or properties that are managed in accordance with the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards throughout the certification period.
1.1.2.2 The producer maintains adequate records to document the location and status of each livestock group and grazing property.

1.1.2.3 In the event that it is necessary to bring separate herds to the same property at particular management intervals during the year (e.g. shearing time, special feeding periods, etc.), all individual animals within a certified flock or herd must be identifiable and the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards must be followed on the property until the herds or flocks are separated.

1.1.3 to 1.1.6 Not allocated.

1.1.7 In the event that a certifying producer shares a public or private grazing lease with one or more additional lessees, the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards must be used for all livestock in the entire lease area, including non-certified herds or flocks. It is the responsibility of the certifying producer to negotiate the use of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ management with leaseholders that share the lease on private land.

1.1.8 Animals from which products are to be marketed under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards must reside on the property or properties described in the certification application.

1.2. Livestock Management Practices
Farmers and ranchers approved as following Certified Wildlife Friendly™ practices on their land, and who wish to display the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ seal on livestock products must meet the following standards.

Note: Producers who meet the requirements of the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards on their land but who do not meet the standards below may request to be approved to use the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ seal on websites and other material not directly linked to the sale of livestock products.

1.2.1 Animals must be managed to meet Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards from birth to slaughter in order for meat, leather and horn to be marketed under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ logo.

1.2.2 Dairy animals, including home bred replacements, must be managed to meet Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards from birth to the end of their productive life in order for dairy products to be marketed under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ logo.

1.2.3 Laying poultry must be managed to meet Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards from day old in order for eggs and feathers to be marketed under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ logo.

1.2.4 Fiber animals and bees must be managed to meet Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards for at least one year in order for fiber or honey to be marketed under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ logo.
1.2.5 Breeding stock from non-Certified Wildlife Friendly™ farms or ranches may be introduced to a Certified Wildlife Friendly™ flock or herd.

Section II. Coexistence Practices

2.0. Use of Best Management Practices to Protect Livestock

2.0.1 Knowledge of wildlife presence in the area, predator-prey-livestock interactions and management of livestock to avoid depredation must serve as the primary tools to minimize the potential for conflict with wildlife.

2.1 Knowledge of Predators and Prey

2.1.1 Producers must continually observe their farm or ranch, whether owned or leased, in order to recognize the changing potential for conflict with wildlife.

2.1.2 Producers must communicate with neighbors, knowledgeable individuals, wildlife agencies, conservation organizations or others to recognize the changing potential for conflict with wildlife.

2.1.3 Producers should educate themselves about local wildlife and ecosystems.

2.2 Non-Lethal Management Practices

2.2.1 Producers must employ a mix of management practices to protect stock and enable wildlife to share the landscape.

Options for acceptable non-lethal predator management practices may include (but are not limited to):

a. Adaptive Grazing Planning. Producers schedule pasture use to take advantage of seasonal lulls in predation pressure, when possible. Knowledge of dens and patterns of wildlife use is necessary to implement this strategy.

b. Using Stock Size and Vigilance. Producers mix larger animals with smaller livestock for protection.

c. Adaptive Feeding Strategies. Producers gather livestock through feeding as part of collecting them in a secure location at night or at other strategic periods may function as a protective strategy.

d. Secure Lambing and Calving. Producers use protected pastures, fenced lots, or sheds to secure stock if possible during highly vulnerable periods.

e. Timing of birthing and hatching. Producers time calving, lambing, kidding, farrowing and/or hatching to reduce predation risk.

f. Use of Livestock Guardian Dogs, Llamas and Donkeys. Producers investigate and use livestock guardian animals where their presence has shown to add to predator deterrence.

g. Use of Barriers and Mechanical Deterrents. Producers use barriers such as electric fencing and fladry (fencing with special flags), and mechanical deterrents such as RAG (radio-activated guard) boxes to deter predators.
h. Use of Harassment techniques. Producers use harassment, as appropriate, to prevent acclimation of predators to livestock or home ranch areas. Predators should be discouraged from being around livestock whenever possible.

i. Night feeding. Producers feed animals at night; bringing livestock together for protection during a period of potential risk. Anecdotal evidence suggests this reduces night birthing.

j. Other action appropriate to the farm or ranch.

2.2.2 Producers must monitor stock closely, demonstrating increased vigilance during sensitive periods such as calving. In areas where livestock are pastured in remote areas, the use of herders or riders to provide frequent monitoring may be necessary.

2.2.3 If a depredation event occurs, producers must take action to reduce additional events. Actions may include increasing monitoring, removing attractants and/or moving livestock.

2.2.4 The management and protection of livestock guardian dogs must adhere to the Animal Welfare Approved Guidelines for Working Dogs.

Note: These can be accessed at http://www.animalwelfareapproved.org/standards

2.2.5 Other guardian animals must be managed with high welfare practices.

2.2.6 Guardian animals must be suitable for the duties expected of them.

2.2.7 Guardian animals must be suitable for the climatic and topographical conditions of the farm or ranch.

2.2.8 Live trapping of specific predators engaged in predation is only permitted when all other options for livestock management and predator exclusion have been shown to be ineffective.

2.2.9 Live traps must be managed to target the specific problem animal.

2.2.10 Live traps must be checked at least twice every 24 hours.

2.2.11 Leg hold traps and snares are prohibited.

2.2.12 Glue boards are prohibited.

2.2.13 Any trapped animals must be treated humanely.

Note: See section III below for information on lethal control of predators

2.2.14 Any relocation of trapped animals must take place in accordance with the recommendations of local wildlife experts.
2.2.15 Bone yards must be inaccessible to predators and scavengers.

   Note: exceptions can be made for rats, mice and birds of prey unless these are a significant problem on the property.

2.2.16 If livestock die in an area where active grazing is taking place they must be removed from the area or otherwise made unavailable to predators.

2.2.17 Efforts must be made to make grain and other feedstuffs inaccessible to wildlife.

   Note: Grain and feedstuffs do not include hay and other forage.

2.3 Provision of Quality Habitat - Natural and Uncultivated areas

2.3.1 Uncultivated areas on farms and ranches must provide cover and forage essential to support predator-prey ecosystems.

2.3.2 Grasslands and forest should be maintained to support key plant and wildlife species.

2.3.3 Linkages and corridors which provide safe passage for wildlife must be accorded priority.

2.3.4 Special attention should be paid to riparian and flood areas which are of critical importance to biodiversity conservation compared to the rest of the landscape.

2.3.5 Weeds must be controlled to reduce their threat to important habitat areas.

2.3.6 Producers must conserve and restore wildlife habitat.

   Examples of habitat conservation or restoration can include:
   
   2.3.6.1 Planting or conservation of native trees and/or plant trees for roosting and nesting habitat.

   2.3.6.2 Planting areas such as field corners and fence rows to extend natural habitat.

   2.3.6.3 Flooding select areas to create habitat for migratory birds, where applicable.

   2.3.6.4 Allowing the beaver, a keystone species, to build dams in natural waterways.

2.4 Provision of Quality Habitat - Cultivated Areas

2.4.1 Producers must promote biodiversity and improve the ability of cropland to function as habitat for a multitude of species.

   Examples of improving habitat and biodiversity on cropland can include:

   2.4.1.1 Using crop rotations such that some fields provide food and cover for wildlife.

   2.4.1.2 Leaving patches in fields at harvest for wildlife forage and cover.
2.4.1.3 Avoiding nest or den sites at critical periods.
2.4.1.4 Planting windrows to serve as habitat at field perimeters.
2.4.1.5 Using winter cover crops to provide green browse and cover.
2.4.1.6 Using intercropping in perennial crop systems.
2.4.1.7 Flooding fallow fields for waterfowl and shorebirds when appropriate.

2.5 Livestock Management for Biodiversity Conservation

2.5.1 Producers must manage livestock in such a way as to conserve native plants, protect sensitive areas such as streams, and promote biodiversity.
2.5.2 Producers must have an adequate balance of pasture and feedstuffs to provide for the needs of wildlife and livestock.
2.5.3 Producers must promote native plant growth that provides cover for wildlife.
2.5.4 Sensitive natural habitats and riparian zones must be managed to enable native plants to flourish.

Note: Strategies include herding, development of off-stream water sources and distribution of feed and mineral blocks to keep focal points away from sensitive areas.

2.6 Fencing to Allow Movement of Predators and Prey.

Fences are barriers to wildlife movement and although they are often necessary on agricultural lands, they should be constructed and maintained to maximize wildlife movement across properties.

2.6.1 Producers must strive to limit the extent of exclusionary fences - although it is recognized exclusionary fences are appropriate and encouraged in some places.

Note: appropriate uses of exclusionary fencing include:

a) When stock are concentrated in a small area for certain periods (e.g. for lambing or calving).

b) When smaller sized livestock are kept on the farm or ranch (e.g. poultry).

c) When the risk of predation is high.

d) When wildlife can use other areas of the property.

Exclusionary fences are those that are impermeable to most wildlife. They may be temporary or permanent and can include: electric fencing; woven wire fences and flagging (fladry).

2.6.2 Producers must use fences to exclude predators from attractants, such as calving and lambing areas, bee yards, and night corrals.
2.6.3 Property boundary fences should be designed to allow wildlife passage.

2.6.4 Fencing should have gaps, open gates or lay-down sections for wildlife passage whenever livestock are not present.

2.6.5 Fencing should avoid excluding wildlife from riparian habitats, watering points and other high quality habitats and to avoid cutting off migration and travel corridors.

2.6.6 Producers should avoid topping woven wire fences with barbed-wire.

2.6.7 New fences on open pasture must be constructed so as not to impede wildlife passage.  
*Note: See Annex 2 for information on the characteristics of wildlife-friendly fences.*

2.6.8 A plan must be in place to modify or replace existing fences with wildlife friendly fencing if current configurations impede important wildlife movement.  
*Note: See Annex 2 for information on the characteristics of wildlife-friendly fences.*

2.6.9 Old fence and wire must be removed from the fields whenever no longer needed.

**Section III. Use of Lethal Control**

In rare cases, lethal control may be used as a last resort. If a threat from predators exists that proves unmanageable through non-lethal means, including live trapping, advice should be sought from Certified Wildlife Friendly™ regarding the use of lethal control. Lethal control may only be used when all options for non-lethal control have been exhausted, and when specific individual predators are causing a continuous or immediate threat to livestock. Any control of predators or other key species will be subject to careful review.

**3.0 Authorized Use of Lethal Control**

3.0.1 Consultation with Certified Wildlife Friendly™ must occur prior to the use of lethal control for any key species including all predators.  
*Note: An exception may be made in the event of an active attack on livestock. See standard 3.2.1 below.*

3.0.2 Lethal control for all key species may only be used when all options for non-lethal control have been exhausted, and when specific individuals are causing a continuous or immediate threat to livestock.

3.0.3 Unless prior permission has been granted by Certified Wildlife Friendly™ producers must not conduct, or authorize anyone else to conduct, any lethal control of key species (including, but not limited to: foxes, coyotes, prairie dogs, wolves, mountain lions, bears, hawks and eagles) on land, whether owned or leased, private or public, used for livestock production under the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards.
3.0.4 If the producer has authorized lethal control of key species in the previous year, he or she must notify Wildlife Services and/or other predator control agents in writing that lethal control methods are no longer permitted. The producer must provide a copy of such written notification to Certified Wildlife Friendly™.

3.1 Unauthorized Use of Lethal Control

3.1.1 Lethal control of key species without the prior permission of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ is only permitted in the case of an active attack by a predator on livestock.

*Note: An active attack occurs when despite the best efforts of the farmer or rancher a predator is seen to chase, wound or kill a domestic animal. Evidence of predators consuming livestock is not evidence of an active attack.*

3.2 Requirements in the Event Lethal Control Takes Place

This section covers any use of lethal control whether conducted with or without prior permission from Certified Wildlife Friendly.

3.2.1 Lethal control must target the specific, individual animal(s) that is/are creating the conflict.

3.2.2 Lethal control of any animal must result in instantaneous unconsciousness and death.

3.2.3 Use of poison for lethal control is prohibited.

3.2.4 Use of lethal control of key species must be reported to Certified Wildlife Friendly™ within 72 hours.

3.2.5 Records of any euthanized key species must be maintained.

3.2.6 In response to lethal control of any predator re-evaluation of non-lethal deterrence methods in use must occur.

3.2.7 Any producer that has to resort to lethal control will be placed on probationary status until a review of non-lethal deterrent methods and proposed changes can be completed.

3.3 Hunting

3.3.1 Hunting on land owned or leased by the certifying producer is prohibited.

*Note: On a case-by-case basis, hunting of non-key species for subsistence, or cultural use may be certified.*

3.3.2 to 3.3.11 Not allocated.

3.3.12 If permission is given for hunting of non-key species for subsistence or cultural use it must meet the principles of Fair Chase.
Note: See Annex 3 for further information on Fair Chase.

3.3.13 If permission is given for hunting of non-key species for subsistence or cultural use records must be kept of numbers and species of animals hunted on land controlled by the certifying producer.

Section IV. Records and Plans

Property owners are required to keep and update the following records on a regular basis.

4.0.1 A map of the property or properties described in the application, with key wildlife and habitat areas and any areas of concern must be developed.  
Note: Maps developed by NRCS, as part of a producer’s Organic System Plan, or for other certifications are generally acceptable, provided they show the information listed in this section. Producers may also provide their own maps based on use of aerial photos (available at no cost from NRCS).

4.0.2 Maps and accompanying materials must show the following (where applicable)
   4.0.2.1 Property boundaries.
   4.0.2.2 Fences (note fence types and distinguish exclusionary from wildlife-friendly).
   4.0.2.3 Roads.
   4.0.2.4 Buildings.
   4.0.2.5 Pastures.
   4.0.2.6 Hay and crop fields.
   4.0.2.7 Irrigation systems.
   4.0.2.8 Natural water sources and wetlands; indicating springs, streams (distinguish permanent from seasonal water sources).
   4.0.2.9 Water tanks (distinguish permanent from seasonal water sources).
   4.0.2.10 Forest patches, if different from aerial photo (e.g. Woodlots, orchards, x-mas tree plantings).
   4.0.2.11 Predator dens, middens, latrines.
   4.0.2.12 Raptor nests.
   4.0.2.13 Areas of regular sightings of predators or prey or their sign.
   4.0.2.14 Chicken coops.
   4.0.2.15 Beehives.
   4.0.2.16 General location of dogs (working or guardian).
   4.0.2.17 Scare devices (fladry, lights, noise boxes etc.).
   4.0.2.18 Live traps.
   4.0.2.19 Herders and other forms of human supervision.
   4.0.2.20 Any other non-lethal deterrent practice in use.

4.0.3 An updated list of wildlife species using the farm must be maintained, including numbers of animals where known and details of species of concern.

4.0.4 An updated list of wildlife species using the area surrounding the farm must be maintained, including numbers of animals where known and details of species of concern.
Note: For new producers entering the program a period of 6 months will be provided to put the documents listed in standards 4.0.3 and 4.0.4 in place. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ will be able to assist in this process. Certified Wildlife Friendly™ will also provide templates for record-keeping upon request.

4.0.5 There must be detailed records of any conflict incidence, including date and location, and ameliorative measures taken.

4.0.6 There must be records of checks and finds in live traps.

4.0.7 There must be records of any euthanized predators, whether live trapped or not.

4.0.8 There must be a grazing plan and evidence of a feed and forage balance that accounts for the needs of resident prey.

Note: NRCS provides this information to producers at no cost. Producers wishing to develop these on their own can find guidance via:


Section V. Derogations

5.0.1 If, in the opinion of the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Standards Board, a system meets all of the principles of the program but does not pass a specific standard or standards, derogation may be granted.

5.0.2 In order for a derogation to be granted, an audit report must be submitted stating the deviation from the published standard, the reason for this deviation, the length of time this deviation from standards will occur and the outcome to wildlife should the derogation be granted.
ANNEX 1

Key species are defined as the following:

1. Any species defined by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened.

2. Species of concern including keystone species and predators. These are species that may not be listed by IUCN but which play a critical functional role in the ecosystem.

3. Other species that are important in the local context but may not have legal protection for a variety of reasons.

Certified Wildlife Friendly™ will maintain a list of current Key Species of concern and where applicable individual localized species.

ANNEX 2

Note: This Annex should be treated as a guide to the various options for wildlife-friendly fencing. Not all of these suggestions are appropriate for all farms – e.g. sheep farmers may require the bottom wire or rail of fencing to be closer to the ground than 16”. References for further information and options for wildlife friendly fencing are also shown below.

Some characteristics of wildlife-friendly fences:

- highly visible to ungulates and birds, allows for wildlife to jump over or crawl under, and provides access to important habitats and corridors
- Fencing wire placed on the side of the fence posts where the domestic animals are located
- Smooth wire or rounded rail for the top, smooth wire on the bottom
- Height of top rail or wire should be 42” or less
- At least 12” between the top two wires
- At least 16” between the bottom wire or rail and the ground
- Posts at minimum 16’ intervals
- Gates, drop-downs, removable fence sections or other passages where animals concentrate and cross
- Using a rail, high-visibility wire, flagging or other visual markers for the top
- Common configurations for sheep and cattle using 4-Stranded Barbed-wire Fence are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wire</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Cattle and Sheep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Wire</td>
<td>40-42” barbed</td>
<td>32” barbed</td>
<td>38” barbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Wire</td>
<td>28” barbed</td>
<td>22” barbed</td>
<td>26” barbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Wire</td>
<td>22” barbed</td>
<td>16” barbed</td>
<td>18” barbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Wire</td>
<td>16-18” smooth</td>
<td>&gt; 10” smooth</td>
<td>&gt;10” smooth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Additional guidance on fencing can be found in *Fencing with Wildlife in Mind (2009)* from the Colorado Division of Fish and Wildlife or *A Landowner’s Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences (2008)* from Landowner/Wildlife Resource Program, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.)
Common fencing modifications to make fences more wildlife friendly:

- Replacing barbed wire with smooth wire
- Adjusting the height of the top wire to no more than 42” above the ground
- Reducing the total number of wires to three, or at most four
- Adding a rail, flagging, high visibility wire or PVC cover to the top wire to increase visibility
- Raising the bottom wire to at least 16” above the ground
- Making wildlife crossings at common use areas by using dropped wires, dropped rails, let-down fence or underpasses (raising the bottom, smooth wire between posts to 18” or gathering bottom wires in PVC pipe to create an underpass)
- Providing access to streams, wetlands, watering areas and migration corridors
- Removing old fence and wire wherever no longer needed.

ANNEX 3

Principles of Ethical Sportsmen:

1. Obey all applicable laws and regulations.
2. Attain and maintain the skills necessary to make the kill as certain and quick as possible with no prolonged suffering of an animal.
3. Behave in a way that will bring no dishonor to either the hunter, the hunted, or the environment.

The term "Fair Chase" prohibits hunting animals that are:

1. Helpless in a trap, deep snow or water, or on ice.
2. From any power vehicle or powerboat.
3. By "jacklighting" or shining at night.
4. By the use of any tranquilizers or poisons.
5. While inside escape-proof fenced enclosures.
6. By the use of any power vehicle or power boats for herding or driving animals, including use of aircraft to land alongside or to communicate with or direct a hunter on the ground.
7. By the use of electronic devices for attracting, locating or pursuing game or guiding the hunter to such game, or by the use of a bow or arrow to which any electronic device is attached.
8. Other than on foot
9. Using bait stations
10. Part of a ‘canned’ hunt or game ranching operation

Adapted from: http://www.huntright.org/where-we-stand/fair-chase
Citations


The Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network wishes to thank the Wild Farm Alliance for its contribution to these standards.