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**ICA Joins in Letter to Congress Supporting
Wildlife Services Livestock Protection Program**

Lockhart, Texas - March 9, 2010 - For Immediate Release -The Independent Cattlemen's Association (ICA) recently joined with the American Sheep Industry Association and 57 other livestock groups in a letter to Congress requesting additional funding for the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) for FY 2011.

"The Wildlife Services Livestock Protection Program is vital to the economic survival of our country's livestock industry," said Bill Hyman, ICA executive director.

"The control of predators is important to many farm and ranch families, especially in the West Texas area. Each year more than 250,000 sheep and nearly 150,000 cattle are lost nationwide to predation," he noted. "Coyotes, bobcats, vultures and other predators prey on newborn calves every calving season and now feral swine are becoming an increasing problem for ranchers across the state."

"The USDA's Wildlife Services, relentlessly under attack by animal rights activist, is faced with rising costs for such items as fuel and equipment," said Hyman. "Without additional funding and support, many ranching operations will face critical losses in the coming year. As Texas ranchers work to increase calving rates after two years of drought, they don't need to find their newborn calves destroyed by predators."

Hyman pointed out that deer hunting is a necessary source of income for many Texas ranchers, and losing half or more of a fawn crop to coyotes, mountain lions and bobcats matters more now than ever before.

“ICA strongly supports the continuation of this valuable program,” said Hyman. “We strongly recommend the increase in funding to sustain and improve the Wildlife Services Livestock Protection Program.”

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