

A Field Level Perspective of Winter Elk Damage and Conflict in western Wyoming



Harsh Winter Conditions



Elk often forced into conflict situations

- ▶ Statutory and regulatory damage obligations since 1939 to:
 - Stored Crops
 - Stock Feedlines
 - Improvements “fences, etc.”
- ▶ Elk and cattle co-mingling / Brucellosis disease concerns – Zero tolerance requires immediate action (Jan – April)

Damage to Stored Crops

- ▶ Short term – difficult to mitigate entirely



Damage to Stored Crops

- ▶ Long term – game proof stackyard program



Damage to Improvements

- ▶ Fences, wind breaks/shelterbelts, etc.



Damage / Conflict at feedlines

- ▶ Hay consumption
- ▶ *Elk and cattle co-mingling / brucellosis disease concerns are imminent* - **Zero Tolerance**



Mitigation Solutions

- ▶ Extended hunting seasons in chronic problem areas thru Jan. 31



Elk Hazing

▶ Available Habitat



Elk Hazing

▶ Highway Complications



Elk Hazing

- ▶ Feedgrounds are often the only anti-conflict location for elk long term



Elk Baiting

- ▶ Baiting elk away from conflict to a more desirable location



Emergency Feeding

- ▶ Large concentrations of elk in conflict and inability to displace elk out of problem area
- ▶ Common in Star Valley and Buffalo Valley
- ▶ Farson early 1970's and 2017



Lethal Take Permits

▶ Last Resort



Winter Elk Damage and Conflict in western Wyoming

- ▶ Frequently prolonged periods of cold and snow
- ▶ Limited available winter habitat
- ▶ Elk in Conflict
 - ▶ Damage to stored crops
 - ▶ Damage and brucellosis co-mingling on livestock feedlines
 - ▶ Highway concerns
- ▶ Short-term - conflict mitigation techniques are labor intensive and expensive and rarely resolve the conflict
- ▶ Long-term - feedgrounds have been a useful tool to field managers as a successful solution in mitigating elk damage and conflict

Questions?



End