

Predator Awareness

Monitoring update

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2017

The *predator awareness* training that was applied in 2016 on National Forest allotments was a successful effort. The *Stockmanship skill* of *predator awareness training* was not used or applied in the off season to the two ranches that were on the USFS allotments. The purpose of that was to return the cattle and wait to hear of a possible response of handling issues or problems. None were reported. Another issue was to measure the trainings retention among the cattle. After seven months of layoff with no *predator awareness Stockmanship* being used. The cattle returned to the

Forrest allotments and predator monitoring began again. The response of each of the two ranches that are on forestry permits had very similar results.

The observations of 2017 were limited to one day per week. The reason for the reduced time allotted was the removal of financial assistance of a NGO. The ranchers concerns of wolf presence resulted in the ranchers carrying the efforts on their own. The results of that was no time for training updates. The time allotted was used to monitor predators presence only.

The first contacts with the cattle were in July and showed that the cattle appeared to be maintaining the herd group posture. Slight pressure tests were applied and with good results. The cattle grouped and stood their ground.

The summer months this year were warmer than usual. As stated in the *wolf migration* paper, the micro-climate theory posed to warm of weather for wolf presence and possibly other mammal predators pressures in these locations. This lack of predators may have contributed to the following lapses in *predator awareness training retention*.

The behavior that was observed in the herds that did not receive continued *predator awareness training* updates, was that the cattle began to show a steady decline of *herd awareness* and a more frequent observations of individualized grazing. When the *pressure test* was applied, flight often seemed to have no purpose of direction. Individual livestock did not seek the comfort and security of the herd group and seemed to often stay individualized. An apparent loss of *herd awareness*. The reason for the training fading may be the lack of predators or the training simply may have a shelf life. The end of the last years training seems to have lost its effectiveness at eight to nine months. The facts are that without continued *predator awareness* updates in training, the herd groups defensive posture of *predator awareness training* may fade away.

The ranchers that continued updates and *predator awareness Stockmanship skills*, their livestock had the appearance to be more content and had them remaining

and grazing with *herd awareness* and the *pressure tests* still resulted in the defensive posture of *predator awareness*. Although these cattle were in Oregon and had a close proximity to wolves. Which may have aided in the posturing of the herd groups. With the training updates the cattle appeared to stay calmer and appeared to graze and loaf in herd groups.



Observations: The *predator Awareness training* is intended to promote a calm defensive herd posture. In observing cattle in proximity to one of the cooperating ranches in Oregon. Several groups of neighboring cattle in surrounding areas appeared to be highly sensitive and flighty. This condition remained for several weeks. The project cattle that had been trained in *predator awareness* appeared to have tighter *herd awareness* posture threw this time. Although the trained cattle did not show any signs of stress or heightened anxiety. The speculation is that there had been some type of stressful pressure in the area, possibly predators.



Conclusion: *Predator Awareness Stockmanship* requires a maintenance program. The effort of continuing the practice of pro-active *Stockmanship* is a change in all of your livestock handling activities and all promote the herd response of the herd being the livestock's safe-zone.

Comments: Over a period of several years, observations of livestock and their geographic dispositions, show a difference in grazing and loafing patterns. Cattle that are in areas of non-predator pressure show a natural looser grouping. Although cattle that are in known predator areas may also show disbursed patterns they are often seen in tight herd groups. With the network of relayed sightings of predators, although just hearsay. The sightings confirm a predator's pressure creates the defensive posture of herding. The ranchers by establishing the livestock's posture of herding prior to the predators establishing the same reaction, diminish the risk of individualization and promote a calm herd action and create a herd response that makes handling an easier and calmer management practice.