

KENT COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM¹ (KCAF)

LIVESTOCK UNDER ATTACK – KCAF supports NFU's campaign to #take the lead and asks dog owners to,

- use a lead near livestock when in the countryside
- keep their dogs secure at home

There is an increasing incidence of dog attacks on livestock. Thousands of sheep and cattle die as a consequence of injuries caused by dogs every year and livestock worrying costs the industry an estimated £1.6m*(NFU Mutual). But this figure is just the tip of the iceberg as many losses are uninsured and often unaccounted for.

Kent NFU Adviser Amanda Corp says: *“The NFU is reminding people to keep dogs on a lead, rather than letting them run freely because livestock may be nearby. Dogs naturally have a chase instinct and they can inflict the most terrible bites on sheep which can die slowly and painfully of their injuries. Pregnant ewes can also abort their lambs if chased by dogs.”*

If a dog worries livestock, the dog owner or the person responsible for the animal at the time is guilty of an offence under the Animals Act 1971 and may be sued for compensation by the farmer or in certain cases the dog can be legally shot.

Ms Corp emphasises that sheep farming involves long-term husbandry, saying: *“It takes two years of care and attention for a farmer to raise a sheep - from lamb to breeding ewe. It is therefore heartbreaking for a farmer when flocks are attacked by dogs. Even the smallest dog can injure a sheep, that's why it is so important to use a lead around livestock”.*

Note: There is a Government backed campaign to understand the true incidence of dog attacks. Please report livestock worrying incidents that you witness and cases of dogs that you know are not secured adequately at home. Phone Kent Police on 101 – they will welcome your call.

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¹ The Kent Countryside Access Forum represents Rights of Way users and Landowners across Kent