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ARE LETHAL CONTROL METHODS THE WAY FORWARD? A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

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LIVESTOCK HUSBANDRY IN THE CAPE

- ◉ Traditional kraals
- ◉ Veld damage/ disease
- ◉ Extirpation of large predators



RISE OF THE FENCE

- ⦿ Contains stock
- ⦿ Improved yields - lambs and wool
- ⦿ Reduces
 - theft/ loss of stock
 - disease
 - veld damage
- ⦿ 5% - 12% lost to predators

A PRE-ADAPTED PREDATOR

- Highly adaptable
- Pre-colonial predation on livestock
- Introduced stock
 - more abundant
 - less predator aware
- Removal of natural enemies - population increase



POISON

- ◉ Strychnine - late 19th century
- ◉ Subsidised, bounties for tails
- ◉ Annual Congresses of Wild Animal Poisoning Clubs
- ◉ Fraud probably widespread
- ◉ Incentive for trespassing
- ◉ Over 50 000 jackals killed 1898-1899

“the jackal plague is spreading, and jackals are now found in many parts of the Colony where they were formerly unknown”

Report of the Select Committee on the
Destruction of Vermin, 1904



Photo: Armand Kok

WHY WAS THE POISONING CAMPAIGN UNSUCCESSFUL?

- ◉ Driven mainly by small-stock farmers
- ◉ Cattle farmers unenthusiastic
- ◉ Jackals useful to crop farmers
- ◉ Large, unused farms/ unallocated Govt land
- ◉ Jackals regurgitated poisoned meat
- ◉ Concerns about impact on useful species - rodent populations increased

LETHAL CONTROL - THE GLORY DAYS

- Emergence of dog packs - effective in Molteno district
- 1914
 - dog pack subsidies, bounties restored
- 1917
 - dog subsidies increased
 - consent of landowner not required for jackal hunting
- 1920
 - Non-compliant landowners fined

Year	Number of bounties paid for proven jackal kills
1914	2 501
1915	11 970
1916	8 652
1917	12 530
1918	21 637
1919	58 670
1920	47 641
1921	48 849
1922	47 845
1923	57 942

DID IT WORK?

- ◉ Bounty payments declined from 1923, but rose again in 1930's
- ◉ Higher stocking rates increased vulnerability to drought in 1926/1927
- ◉ Over 6 million sheep lost to drought/locusts in early 1930's
- ◉ Jackal found to be reduced in many Karoo districts by 1950's

CAN LETHAL CONTROL BE AN EFFECTIVE OPTION IN FUTURE?

- Lethal control successful due to
 - Government subsidies/ incentives
 - Broad support
 - Active implementation
- Contemporary obstacles
 - More 'unproductive' land - many 'edges'
 - Fewer landowners willing to implement lethal control methods
 - Public opinion
 - Less Government support

CAN LETHAL CONTROL EVER BE
MORE THAN A SHORT-TERM
SOLUTION IN THIS CONTEXT?



REFERENCES

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