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Livestock production systems management and stray dogs attacks in and nearby protected areas

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The incidence and the damage done by stray dog's attacks in sheep have economical impact in Portugal. We pretend identify livestock management conditions that help to prevent stray dog's attacks. The results are based on inquiries relative to 29.641 ha and 50.094 ruminants. Main results: -The percentage of milk or meat farms with attacks didn't differ (61 & 68%); different levels of attacks were observed in milking and non-milking flocks in the milk farms. Specific management conditions exist in the milking flock that originates a higher flock protection (human proximity, infrastructure, night protection); -Livestock guardian dog (LGD) presence is dissuasive. Farms without LGD had more attacks (82 vs 18%); -Also livestock grazing system affects the incidence of attacks: zero-grazing without attack; semi-transhumance with one accidental attack; 20% of flocks in pendulation and 78% of flocks in permanent grazing (continuous or rotational) have been attacked. Special attention should be done to non-milking and meat flocks in order to assume specific protections solutions to reduce the damage (e-fence at night and LGD). The LGD presence gives good results, but should be complemented with other dissuasion mechanisms. The actual methods of stray dogs population control (shooting, poison and sliding knots) affects wildlife and are especially negative nearby protected areas. LIFE-COEX 04NAT/IT/000144.
