

24 October 2016

Your Ref:

Our Ref: LB/MB/JMH

TYPE ADDRESS

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Dear TITLE

DOG ATTACKS ON LIVESTOCK

This letter is to bring to your attention a rise in the number of reports received in your area where sheep and other livestock have been attacked by domestic dogs that are not under the proper control of a responsible person or owner. In the majority of cases reported to police, the offending dog has come from the surrounding area having escaped from a garden or allowed to roam the area.

If a dog worries livestock on any agricultural land then the owner and, if different, the person in charge is guilty of an offence. The legislation relating to this is contained in the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 and "worrying" is defined as:

- Attacking livestock
- Chasing livestock in such a way as may reasonably be expected to cause injury or suffering to the livestock or abortion or diminution in produce.
- Being at large, not otherwise under close control or on a lead, in a field or enclosure where there are sheep

Such incidents obviously cause distress to the animals and in the majority of cases lead to animals being injured and/or killed. To protect the livestock, the farmer has the right to kill the offending dog and I am sure this is a situation no livestock or dog owner would want to find themselves in.

Additionally, under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, the owner and the person in charge of a dog can be charged with an offence and if convicted be fined up to £1000.

The Local Authority can also impose a Dog Control Order which means certain conditions have to be complied with which will restrict the dog's freedom but means the dog will not have to be destroyed. However, in some cases the Local Authority will have to apply for an order to have the dog destroyed to ensure the safety of surrounding livestock.

However, attacks on livestock by dogs can be prevented and if you are a dog owner I ask that you consider the following guidelines;

1. Ensure your dog is under proper control at all times when in the countryside. All dogs have a natural instinct to chase and this is often enough for livestock to become distressed and be injured.
2. Do not let your dog roam free and if kept outdoors ensure the area is properly secure.
3. If you see a field with livestock, you should avoid taking your dog into that field. Instead, look for different routes where possible and pay attention to local signage.

I thank you for your co-operation.

Marlene Baillie
Police Scotland
Area Commander
Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Oban, Lorn and the Islands