

AWA Speaks Out Against Legislation to Authorize the Establishment of Penned “Hunting” Farms in Alberta

Once again, the provincial government has failed to consult with the public before changing legislation. It has recently come to our attention that Bill 11, the *Livestock Diversity Amendment Act*, includes changes that have the potential to transform the game farm industry, and leave us wondering, **is it still considered “hunting” when the animals are kept in pens?**

Game farming is the domestication and commercial marketing of native and non-native wildlife for a variety of products, (including meat, hides, feathers, and antlers) or for paid hunting. It is an industry designed to privatize and domesticate wild animals (such as deer, elk, or bison), to own and raise them for profit. AWA continues to support living wildlife economies that promote the conservation of wildlife populations in their natural environment and as a public resource to be enjoyed by people who engage in activities such as camping, hunting, fishing and wildlife watching. AWA is opposed to the privatization, domestication and commercialization of wildlife. Game farming is an obvious target of our opposition. Game farming involves intensive, small pasture production or extensive, wide range production of captive wild animals and may pose significant threats to non-

game farm wildlife and conventional agriculture. The installation of high fences disrupts the migratory patterns of wild animals, and the high density of animals living in close proximity has been known to foster diseases and parasites both within “livestock” populations and wild populations.

If passed, this Bill will reclassify domestic cervids (a family of hoofed mammals that includes both deer and elk), as “diversified livestock.” As well, Section 10.1 of the Bill would enable the Minister to issue permits or other kinds of permission to authorize activities that would “otherwise constitute a contravention of this Act.” This gives the Minister of Agriculture the power to allow penned “hunting” of farmed deer and elk. AWA believes that, as it currently stands, Bill 11 should not be passed and, at the very least, Section 10.1 must be removed. In addition, the province must begin a transparent public consultation process with all concerned stakeholders.

- Madeline Wilson