

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rural residents see wolves differently

AB712 introduced in the Wisconsin legislature was in Barbara Lucas' cross-hairs as shown in her Jan. 21 letter. Unfortunately, her beliefs about wolves tends to be typical of urban dwellers. Rural residents who live with wolves have a different perspective.

Terms that appear in her letter show how the wolf has been transformed in a symbolic abstraction. "Iconic," for example, comes from the Latin and Greek words for "sacred image." Is the wolf or any other predator a sacred image? Also, "alpha male/female/pair" were terms introduced in the 1970s but are no longer used because the wolf pack does not have the social structure once attributed to it.

The loss of income to livestock owners is caused by several factors. For those in wolf territory, the USDA reports that cattle suffer weight loss and stress as a result of wolf presence, become more difficult to handle, stampede through fences, and experience disease transmission. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture cautions cattle owners to prevent any canine presence in areas used by cattle. Further, the 1 percent cattle loss caused by wolves is a

statewide figure; the percentage is much higher in counties where wolves live.

If your bottom line was impacted by problems that you could rectify, wouldn't you do that? Without a wolf control program, livestock owners are helpless to address that problem. In short, why add fuel to the fire that you are trying to control?

AB712 is not the Draconian measure that Lucas believes it to be. If enacted, federal agents would be responsible for monitoring the wolf population. Similar legislation was approved in two Rocky Mountain states and no dire consequences have taken place.

*Earl Stahl,
Neenah*