# IFA Protocol for farmers on Sheep Kills by Dogs

The 10-point plan is a simple, easy-to-follow protocol aimed at helping sheep farmers who encounter a dog attack on their flock.

1.  **Stop the dogs**
    If you encounter a dog attack on sheep, the first priority must be to stop the attack immediately; apprehend the marauding dog or dogs; and look after the welfare of the sheep.

2.  **Be aware of the law**
    It is very important that sheep farmers are fully aware of the law, in the context of protecting their sheep flock. It is within the law for a farmer to shoot a dog that is worrying or attacking their sheep flock.

*Under the 1986 Control of Dogs Act it states under the section - Defence in action for damages for shooting a dog.*

*(1) It shall be a defence to any action for damages against a person for the shooting of a dog, or to any charge arising out of the shooting of a dog, if the defendant proves that—*

*(a) the dog was shot when it was worrying, or was about to worry, livestock and that there were no other reasonable means of ending or preventing the worrying; or*

> *(b) (i) the dog was a stray dog which was in the vicinity of a place where livestock had been injured or killed, and*
>
> *(ii) the defendant reasonably believed that the dog had been involved in the injury or killing, and*
>
> *(iii) there were no practicable means of seizing the dog or ascertaining to whom it belonged; and*

*(c) he was the person in charge of the livestock; and*

*(d) he notified within forty-eight hours the member in charge at the nearest Garda Station to the place where the dog was shot of the incident.*

*(2) The provisions of subsection (1) (a) and subsection (1) (b) (i) and (iii) of this section shall be deemed to have been satisfied if the defendant believed that those provisions had been satisfied and he had reasonable grounds for that belief.*

3. **Inform the Gardai**

It is very important that a sheep farmer notifies the Gardai. If a dog is shot following or threatening a sheep flock, the person who shot the dog must notify the member in charge at the nearest Garda Station to the place where the dog was shot, within forty-eight hours.

It is important that the owner of the sheep would report the incident in full, make an official complaint and request that a full investigation is undertaken and report filed. In addition, the farmer should request a site visit from the Garda.

4. **Ring the Dog Warden**

Immediate contact should be made with the local dog warden & the full details reported with a request for a site visit and full report to be filed.

5. **Contact the IFA**

All dog attacks should be notified to the local IFA regional office or head office. The IFA branch representative and member of the National Sheep Committee from the county should be informed.

6. **Ring the Vet**

To look after any injured sheep and protect the welfare of the flock, a vet should be contacted and asked to visit and inspect the flock. The farmer should ask the vet to write a brief report recording the important statistics such as the numbers dead, those severely injured and those treated. This report is vital evidence on the case.

7. **Take a picture/Keep the evidence**

Pictures of dead sheep, injured sheep, dead dogs etc., should be taken on the spot with your phone as this can prove to be vitally important in terms of evidence. All dead sheep must be disposed of and recorded into the knackery.

8. **Get a valuation of losses**

Contact a local auctioneer or valuer and have any dead sheep valued on the spot and any other losses documented.

9. **Inform your insurance company**

It is very important to inform your insurance company of any dog attack as soon as possible after the incident occurs. Likewise, it is very important to establish the insurance company of the dog owner (home and/or farm insurance).

10. **Tell your neighbours**

It is very important that other sheep farmers in the local area are aware of any dog attack in their vicinity, particularly if the dogs are not apprehended. Utilise the local community alert or text messaging facility if available.

*The Irish Farmers Association*                                                    *February 2020*