

I, 1000%, support bringing back hunting with dogs. In 2016, my farm experienced cougar kills (3 cougars hunting together – 1 older male, 1 female and a younger cougar, probably the females offspring) that lost us 5 total animals (3 calves, 2 adults). The cougars attacked at the end of April, first part of May. They also did physical damage to a few other of my reindeer who did not die, but ripped the velvet off antlers, broke tines and twisted the neck of one who took a year to recover. The cougars could not flip him but boy, did they try. Overall, when we calculated the cost of the dead animals and loss of revenue, it tallied almost a ½ million dollars. Each reindeer is irreplaceable due to the inability to import any more reindeer into Oregon, but if we could import, the cost per animal is at \$20,000. So not a small financial loss besides losing our animal friends.

The ODFW contract hunter was too busy to help us (his schedule was out 30+ days) and when we reached out to the Linn Cty contract hunter, he went up the chain and was denied entry to Lane Cty to help us (I am 4 miles from Lane/Linn Cty line). Independent hunters contacted us and we tried using them, but by this time the “hot” time where scent was recent was all over the place due to heavy rains.

We ended up killing 2 of the 3 cougars. The last cougar was the youngest and she learned every evading trick. As people tried to trap her, she kept learning more and more how to evade. But she never left my farm alone. I caught her on game cameras within minutes of me checking camera cards. It wasn't until 2022 that someone posted a photo of a cougar killed at the top of the County line and I never saw her on my cameras again.

My farm is in a high cougar load area and cougars are repelled by dogs. I know this because I have 3 dogs especially trained for this job. Only because of them have I been able to keep my reindeer safe & alive and also myself while working on my farm. I've had cougars jump into fenced areas with me in the same fenced area doing fencing repairs. Dogs are a critical component just for keeping cougars back from farm areas. Cougars have learned they don't need to fear humans or regular dogs. Bringing back dogs for tracking cougars is a very critical part of cougar management.