

(a) If any inhabitant of a county has any sheep, poultry, or livestock destroyed or injured by a dog or dogs, he may apply to the sheriff of the county, who shall appoint three disinterested persons as appraisers to view and appraise the damages by him sustained. At least one of the appraisers shall be a deputy sheriff of the county, and they, under oath, shall state in writing to the county commissioners of the county, the number of sheep, poultry, or livestock killed, the character and extent of the injury, if any done, and the amount of the damages, upon which they shall all agree, sustained by the owner. The appraisers and the owner of the sheep, poultry or livestock shall make oath that they believe the sheep, poultry or livestock to have been destroyed or injured by a dog or dogs. (b) When the report of the proceedings has been filed, the county commissioners of the county shall review the report, and if in their judgment the amount of damages stated is unfair, they shall award an amount as they may deem fair. If the owner of the dog or dogs cannot be determined, the award shall be paid out of the dog license fund. The sworn report of the appraisers shall be deemed prima facie evidence of the fairness of the award of damages in each instance. The county commissioners shall not change an award unless they have personal knowledge of its unfairness, or shall receive competent testimony to the effect that the award is in excess of a fair commercial valuation of the sheep, poultry or livestock injured or destroyed by dogs. (c) If the owner of the dog or dogs doing the damage be known, it is the duty of the county commissioners to notify the owner or owners to kill the dog or dogs immediately. If the owner or owners refuse or neglect to kill the dog or dogs upon notice as aforesaid, the owner or owners shall be liable for the damages to the same extent as he would be liable in case of negligence or malicious destruction of property. The county commissioners may in their discretion have special officers kill the dog or dogs. (d) In Howard and Montgomery counties, the county council shall prescribe by law the manner in which the powers, duties and responsibilities placed within its jurisdiction and control by this section shall be exercised. (e) In Washington County no payments shall be made under this section unless the occurrence is reported to a sheriff or any deputy sheriff, in order to have appraisers appointed, within 48 hours of the damage complained of, and unless the appraisers file their report with the County Commissioners of Washington County within 15 days after their appointment. (f) In [Frederick County and] Washington County, the appraisers to be appointed as provided by this section may also be appointed by the sheriff, or any deputy sheriff of the county. (g) In Kent County, the application to the sheriff shall be made within thirty days after the occurrence of the injury or destruction. (h) In Somerset and Dorchester Counties, this section does not apply. (I) IN FREDERICK COUNTY, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SHALL PRESCRIBE BY ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION THE MANNER IN WHICH THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES PLACED WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION AND CONTROL BY THIS SECTION SHALL BE EXERCISED.