



U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of Information



Release - Immediate.

GOVERNMENT SAVING ELK HERDS.
- - -

Washington, D. C. Recent statements that the elk herds are now starving in the Jackson Hole section of Wyoming are not in accordance with the facts and are resented by the residents of that section, who offer to cooperate with the State and Federal Government in any way requested to help carry the elk through the winter.

About 8,000 elk came to the elk refuge in Jackson Hole to be fed in December, says the United States Department of Agriculture, but conditions have improved since then so that on January 15, only about one-half that number remained about the feeding grounds, the others having gone back to the hills.

Drought Reduced Forage.

The severe drought throughout Wyoming and Montana during the summer of 1919, so reduced the growth of forage on the range and the production of hay on the ranches that the outlook for the great elk herds in and about the Yellowstone Park, and the live stock in that region was serious for the coming winter. The situation affecting the elk became still more critical when severe snow storms and low temperature began the last of October, nearly two months in advance of the usual time. It was evident that the 850 tons of hay available for feeding the elk on the winter elk refuge in Jackson Hole, and the small supply in the possession of the State Game Commission at that point would be wholly inadequate to meet the situation and save the appalling loss which might reach as high as eight or ten thousand animals. To meet this emergency the State Game Warden of Wyoming accumulated about 500 tons of hay and the Secretary of Agriculture authorized the Biological Survey to use part of its general appropriation to meet the emergency by purchasing 573 tons of hay in addition to the 850 tons which it had on hand. There is now available for use in the Jackson Hole section nearly

2,000 tons of hay, which Reservation Warden Nowlin of the Biological Survey, in charge of the Winter Elk Refuge, considers will be sufficient to carry most of the elk of that section through the winter.

As still further assurance, the people of the Jackson Hole section have informed a representative of the Biological Survey that should more hay be required later in the season they will see that it is provided. This action on the part of the stockmen is a generous one in view of the great need of all the hay available for the use of live stock. In fact, large numbers of live stock have already been removed from that region in order to forestall heavy losses from lack of feed.

Northern Herd Threatened.

At the beginning of winter the critical situation of the southern elk herd was duplicated for the northern elk herd, which was forced out of the Yellowstone National Park by the same storm which drove down the southern animals in October. The National Park Service promptly made an emergency purchase of nearly enough hay to carry these animals through the winter and is now engaged in securing the additional amount needed. It is thus apparent that through the prompt action of the Government Bureaus and the State Game Commission of Wyoming, with the cooperation of the people in the Jackson Hole section the appalling losses of elk from starving, which appeared imminent early in the season, will be prevented.

###