Donkeys help, too
I am writing in response to your January 2011 article on controlling predators. Specifically, I am referring to the situation at Murray Gingrich’s sheep farm in Grey County.

As I was re-fencing my farm in Schomberg, I hoped to be able to deter predators such as coyotes and perhaps stray dogs. What I was told by farmers, that know more than I, was the addition of the right donkey would work better than any fence to deter predators. I contacted Sheila Burns of the Primrose Donkey Sanctuary, who set me up with a donkey in need of a home.

It has been over four years now and I have not seen any coyote tracks on my property. I hear them and they hear Onya the donkey! This donkey is aware of her job and has been quite successful in keeping the coyotes away from our livestock. The coyotes travel between farms using our creek and ravine on the far east of our property but they are not around the barn, paddocks or house.

For more information on acquiring and housing a donkey to protect your livestock, please contact Sheila Burns at the Primrose Donkey Sanctuary near Rice Lake. Her email is Shelilaburns@sympatico.ca and the website is www.primrosedonkeysanctuary.com

Sandra Kendall
Schomberg

Low voltages hurt over time
University studies on stray voltage only look for a response threshold from the animals under test. Voltage and current levels well below the response threshold still pose a problem to the animals and humans when exposed to them over a long period of time. This is quite evident on problem farms where testing for cow contact by Hydro showed that there is no problem.

At one particular farm, for example, when Hydro was testing for cow contact voltage, there was an average of 0.9 amp AC current coming onto the farm ground system from the primary neutral line. This still is not a problem according to the utility. Hydro does not recognize nor take responsibility for the primary neutral current that is being dumped on farm grounding systems. Farmers have to insist on having a Dairyland Isolator installed by Hydro and pay for it themselves to stop the primary neutral current from coming onto their farm.

A second source of primary neutral current is the return current that is already in the earth. With all the grounding that is taking place on the primary neutral, as much as 75 per cent of the return current is traveling uncontrolled in the earth. Farms that are in the path of this return current also witness problems with their livestock similar to stray voltage.

Recently, a new hydro line was installed to accommodate a new dairy barn near Wellesley. Waterloo North Hydro did such a good job of grounding the primary neutral at every third pole that they were able to put over five amps in the earth when the primary line only had six amps on it. With this extensive grounding practice, the uncontrolled primary neutral current will be even more devastating to the farms affected and more problems will show up, including human health issues.

Information has been gathered from a list of farms that have severe earth current problems which have devastated their operations over the past 10-15 years. This list and information has been sent to the Ontario Energy Board. These farms need the help of the Ontario Energy Board to direct Hydro to rectify the earth current problem that these farms face.

Farmers are responsible for any spills related to pesticide, fuel and manure. They must be reported and the farmer is responsible for the cleanup of the spill. Utilities must be responsible and take control of the primary neutral return current that is uncontrolled in the earth and put it back up on the primary neutral line where it belongs.

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Correction: Incorrect information was published on page 24 of our January cover story on predators.

An M44 is a device placed in the ground with .22 calibre bullet. A blank cartridge shoots a sodium cyanide capsule into the mouth of an animal, killing it. A livestock protection collar releases lithium chloride into the mouth of a predator that attacks an equipped animal.