

**Research Poster from the  
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**Abstract LEARN-02**

**Evaluating the potential to implement performance-based  
agri-environmental policy instruments: stakeholder attitudes related  
to agricultural rights and responsibilities in southern Alberta**

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Blueberry farmers in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia face a perennial problem of how to deter avian predation of their crops (particularly damage and loss resulting from starlings). One technique has been the introduction of noise-makers (most commonly propane cannons) to scare the birds, which has resulted in considerable ire from nearby neighbours who face up to 11 blasts an hour from 6:30 am to 8:30 pm for approximately two months a year. This study uses contingent valuation (CV) techniques to place a dollar figure on how much these residents value the non-market good of “quiet”. Using GIS mapping techniques and in-person interviews, a random group of residents that live within 900 metres of a noise-producing blueberry field was sampled in the summer of 2009. The results show that feelings toward propane cannons are highly variable. The average willingness-to-pay to halt all propane cannon noise was \$70.38 (though this is highly skewed with almost half the sample with a WTP of 0). Multiplying the WTP by the number of people in the population (900 m of a berry field) shows an aggregate social WTP of \$577,607 per annum which represents one source of benefit that would accrue from banning propane cannons. However, in order to conduct a full cost-benefit analysis, the costs of such a move would also have to be estimated.