

**DOG LAW OF 1919 (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 339 of 1919**

**287.280 Loss or damage to livestock or poultry caused by dogs; complaint; examination; summons; proceedings; killing of dog; liability of owner or keeper.**

Sec. 20. If a person sustains any loss or damage to livestock or poultry that is caused by dogs, or if the livestock of a person is necessarily destroyed because of having been bitten by a dog, the person or his or her agent or attorney may complain to the township supervisor or a township officer or other qualified person designated by the township board of the township in which the damage occurred. The complaint shall be in writing, signed by the person making it, and shall state when, where, what, and how much damage was done, and, if known, by whose dog or dogs. The township supervisor or a township officer or other qualified person designated by the township board shall at once examine the place where the alleged damage was sustained and the livestock or poultry injured or killed, if practicable. He or she shall also examine under oath, or affirmation, any witness called. After making diligent inquiry in relation to the claim, the township supervisor or a township officer or other person designated by the township board shall determine whether damage has been sustained and the amount of that damage, and, if possible, who was the owner of the dog or dogs that did the damage. If during the course of the proceedings the owner of the dog causing the loss or damage to the livestock becomes known, the township supervisor or a township officer or other person designated by the township board shall request the district court judge to immediately issue a summons against the owner commanding him or her to appear before the township supervisor or township officer or other person designated by the township board and show cause why the dog should not be killed. The summons may be served anyplace within the county in which the damage occurred, and shall be made returnable not less than 2 nor more than 6 days from the date stated in the summons and shall be served at least 2 days before the time of appearance mentioned in the summons. Upon the return day fixed in the summons the township supervisor or township officer or other person designated by the township board shall proceed to determine whether the loss or damage to the livestock was caused by the dog, and if so he or she shall immediately notify the sheriff or the animal control officer of the county of that fact and upon notification the sheriff or the animal control officer shall kill the dog wherever found. Any owner or keeper of the dog or dogs shall be liable to the county in a civil action for all damages and costs paid by the county on any claim as provided in this section.

**History:** 1919, Act 339, Eff. Aug. 14, 1919;—CL 1929, 5264;—Am. 1937, Act 47, Imd. Eff. May 18, 1937;—CL 1948, 287.280;—Am. 1968, Act 38, Eff. Jan. 1, 1969;—Am. 1972, Act 349, Imd. Eff. Jan. 9, 1973;—Am. 1989, Act 45, Imd. Eff. June 12, 1989.