Susan -- as requested:

SOP 32.0, entitled Control of Mexican Wolves, outlines the guidelines for determining the status of problem/nuisance wolves and also establishes guidelines for conducting wolf control actions. M574, the wolf in question, meets 2 of the criteria that are spelled out in the definition of a problem wolf since he has depredated lawfully present livestock and is a member of a pack that was directly involved in livestock depredations. Once a wolf is determined to be a "problem wolf," it is the Service's responsibility to take the necessary action (relocating, return to captivity, or lethal take) to alleviate the situation. Each situation is determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances and there are no specific guidelines when to use lethal take, except for human safety situations. Lethal take is to be considered a last resort as outlined in both the SOP as well as in the Mexican Wolf Final Rule which states: "The Service encourages those authorized to take wolves to use non-lethal means when practical and appropriate." If efforts to live-capture problem or nuisance wolves are unsuccessful and depredations continue, lethal control may be used in consultation with and following a decision by the Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator (MWRC) or his designee under the following general guidelines:

1. The IFT will permanently remove from the wild, or as a last resort, euthanize any wolves exhibiting a consistent pattern of livestock depredation (three or more confirmed kills within one year in the primary recovery zones or two or more in other areas); a wolf would be euthanized only after a determination by the MWRC that it had no further value to the recovery program. In the case with M574, he has significant value to the recovery program as a whole in that he is the most genetically valuable wolf in the wild, but more significantly, he is ranked #6 genetically overall in the Mexican wolf in the recovery program (includes both the wild population plus the captive wolves throughout the United States and Mexico). In hindsight, it is questionable that he was ever released to the wild because he is so high ranking (i.e., he is not considered "surplus" or "genetically redundant"). Because of this, all attempts should be made to capture him alive.

2. Lethal methods of take may be used when reasonable attempts to capture wolves alive fail and when the Service determines that immediate removal of a particular wolf from the wild if necessary. In the case with M574, one could argue that all reasonable attempts to capture him have not been exhausted yet since trapping has occurred for only approximately 10 trap days (I am checking with the IFT the number of trap days to verify since I do not know the exact #). In the past, when trapping has been unsuccessful, we have used a helicopter and net gun to capture. We have not yet attempted this capture method and do not know if it is feasible due to the terrain he is inhabiting. Darting the wolf is a third option that has not yet been tried. Immediate removal does not seem to be necessary at this point in time for the following reasons:
   a) San Carlos is aware of the situation, recognizes his genetic value, and is not asking for lethal control; b) as per Stuart, the elders would not support killing him; c) Defenders of Wildlife has been notified and is expected to fully compensate San Carlos for the livestock losses. Trapping efforts are suspended for the moment due to weather and road conditions (San Carlos is aware of this and is okay with it); however, once the roads become passable again likely by the end of the week, Wildlife Services will again set traps.
From my captive management perspective, if the wolf is captured then euthanized once in captivity, we can expect a huge outcry from the SSP. Lethal control of wild Mexican wolves is already a highly controversial issue within the SSP but to kill a wolf once it is captured will be unacceptable to many facilities given his genetic value. The reason all these facilities actively participate in the program is to breed genetically valuable wolves for the program. This would be contrary to their mission and I suspect that many facilities would drop from the program which would have devastating effects on the breeding program. Space issues are already a major concern and to loose valuable pen space will be detrimental to our captive breeding goals and maintaining the genetic diversity of the population.