

CHECK FOR SERICEA LESPEDEZA & OTHER INVASIVE WEEDS

While we have received some good rains this year, the cold weather this spring limited growth on the cool-season grass pastures. With pastures shorter than normal it is easier to see the invasive weeds that are in the pasture or around the farmstead. Now is the time to check pastures, CRP and non-crop areas for any invasive or noxious weeds. One of the primary invasive and noxious weeds of concern is *Sericea Lespedeza*. If it is present, it should be treated with a herbicide. If you have harvested hay off CRP or pasture that had *Sericea lespedeza*, use caution when feeding it. Try to feed hay in a confined lot or on cropland to reduce the spread of seed. If you haul manure from this lot, use the manure on cropland rather than pasture. *Sericea lespedeza* is much easier to control on cropland than pasture. People have done an excellent job of identifying and treating it in southeast Nebraska, so we can keep it under control before it gets a foothold and becomes a huge problem here. Even if you have not had a problem with it previously, it may have spread to your farm.



Sericea lespedeza spreads as birds and other animals spread the seed. *Sericea lespedeza* can grow as tall as 4' under good growing conditions. It is a coarse plant with a dense growth of leaves along its stems and branches. In the vegetative stage cattle will eat it, but as it matures it becomes unpalatable to cattle because of high tannin content. It is a very prolific seed producer as well. It is extremely competitive and it can crowd out desirable grasses and forbs.

If you have a weed growing on your property that you don't know what it is and think it may be *Sericea lespedeza*, bring it into the Nemaha County Extension office so we can positively identify it. In early summer PastureGard or Remedy, both of which contain the active ingredient triclopyr, are recommended for control. Later in the summer and in the fall, products that contain the active ingredient metsulfuron are the most effective. For rangeland, the University of Nebraska recommends Cimarron Plus or Escort.

Another weed which seems to be showing up more, especially in non-crop areas is Johnsongrass. I have seen it along roadsides and along the edges of fields and pastures. Johnsongrass is usually easy to control with glyphosate or one of several grass herbicides. Another noxious weed that is showing up more in southeast Nebraska is phragmites or common reed. This weed is spread by the wind or possibly by waterfowl, since it is usually



showing up in wet areas. Due to the location of this weed many times in wetland areas, you may need to use a herbicide approved for use under aquatic conditions. You may need to use the aquatic form of glyphosate, Rodeo or else Arsenal or Habitat to control it. If you find it on your property it is best to control in the spring or fall if it has flowered already.



Another noxious weed that we have had issues with is the musk thistle. It is generally too late to control musk thistles this summer, but if the heads and seeds are still on the plant, you may be able to pull the heads off of the plants and collect them in a bag and burn them. You can also check in the fall and if you have young rosettes coming up, this is an ideal time to treat thistles. It is much easier to control musk thistles when they are young seedlings in the rosette stage than in the spring when they start to bolt. The 2020 Guide for Weed, Diseases and Insect Management in Nebraska (UNL Extension publication EC130) provides several options for control of these weeds and other invasive weeds. If you have questions about these weeds or any weeds you are unfamiliar with, feel free to contact the Extension office in Nemaha County at (402) 274-4755 or Gary Lesoing at (402) 274-9639 (cell) or glesoing2@unl.edu

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