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Abstract

Interest from Iowa hay buyers seeking local sources of noxious weed-free certified hay continues to grow. The interest has come particularly from horse owners who take horses to state and national parks, forests, and wilderness areas in the western states. In addition, some local and state construction contracts specify the use of noxious weed free mulch.

Disciplines

Agronomy and Crop Sciences



Crop Production

Iowa Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage and Mulch Program announced

by Stephen K. Barnhart, Department of Agronomy

Interest from Iowa hay buyers seeking local sources of noxious weed-free certified hay continues to grow. The interest has come particularly from horse owners who take horses to state and national parks, forests, and wilderness areas in the western states. In addition, some local and state construction contracts specify the use of noxious weed free mulch.

The Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) has initiated steps to provide for the certification of weed free hay and mulch for Iowa producers. The ICIA is the designated official seed-certifying agency in Iowa. ICIA also has been designated as the agency to conduct a Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage and Mulch Certification Agency in Iowa by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

This will be a voluntary certification program designed to ensure that hay and mulch products are sold with proper certification identification and meet minimum standards designed to limit the spread of noxious weed seeds. Under this program, forage includes hay, cubes, and pellets. Mulch includes straw for animal bedding, mulching, or other uses. Buyers of these products are provided assurance that forage and mulch certified through this program meet the minimum standards developed by North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA).

Forage and mulch certified under the ICIA certification program, with proper certification markings attached, will be eligible to be shipped into restricted areas in the United States and Canada where only forage and mulch certified under the NAWMA standards can be used.

Inspection of fields prior to harvest and inspection of storage sites will be an integral part of this program. However, the production and distribution of products under this program will depend on the integrity of those participating in the program.

In brief:

- Forage field inspection applications must be received 4 weeks prior to cutting. Delayed applications may result in the field inspection not being made. If such inspections can be arranged, an increased application fee may be assessed. Mulch field inspection applications must be received no later than June 15.
- Fields, storage sites, and areas immediately surrounding them will be inspected. A fee will be assessed to the producer of the hay or mulch.
- If certified, the ICIA will issue certification documents and necessary bale tags or markings for documentation in sale and transit.

Applicants desiring to have their forage and/or mulch certified must apply to Iowa Crop Improvement Association on the application form supplied by the association. Forms are available upon request from the Iowa Crop Improvement Association, 4611 Mortensen Road, Suite 101, Ames, Iowa 50014-6228; phone 515-294-6921; or e-mail iowacrop@iastate.edu.

Stephen K. Barnhart is a professor of agronomy with extension, teaching, and research responsibilities in forage production and management.