

Noxious Weeds Targeted in Colorado Eastern Plains

LAKEWOOD, Colo. - Six noxious weed species are targets for intensive management in Colorado's Eastern High Plains. The new, 3-year program is funded by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. The Colorado Department of Agriculture will administer and implement the program.

The purpose of the program is to help communities develop and implement effective management plans to control or eradicate six relatively uncommon, emerging weed species before they gain a significant foothold on the high plains. Early detection and eradication are keys to managing and preventing new invasions. By focusing on currently uncommon weed species in the eastern plains, outlying small patches of invasive plants can be eradicated before they become huge, costly problems.

CDA's Conservation Services Division will spearhead the program and work with counties, conservation districts, watershed associations, NRCS field offices, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension offices, and individual landowners to support their efforts to target these specific invasive plants where they are uncommon and emerging. The species are: Dalmatian toadflax, Leafy spurge, Diffuse knapweed, Russian knapweed and Spotted knapweed. Saltcedar will be targeted only in the Republican River Watershed under this program.

CDA will help provide educational programs and literature on the economic and environmental costs of these noxious weeds, as well as the identification, physiology and control of the six target species. CDA will also work in the field with communities to help scout, map and control the species. Recommended controls will combine mechanical, cultural (grazing) and chemical control methods specific to each weed. Biological controls will not be recommended for these weed species because they are effective only on large infestations.

Invasive species cost an estimated \$137 billion every year in the U.S. by making land and water unfit for grazing, agriculture, recreation or other uses. In 1989, just three invasive species (jointed goatgrass, volunteer rye and cheatgrass) were responsible for \$24 million in losses to Colorado's wheat producers, and an additional \$36 million in losses to rural communities.

For additional information on this program, log onto <http://www.ag.state.co.us/commissioner/resource/inside%20ag/aprilweeds.html>

For more on CDA's noxious weed management program, log onto <http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/Weedhome.html>