

Weed-free horse feed

The problem:

Weeds are a subject which may not seem worth much thought when measured against the myriad activities of our daily lives. Most people think of weeds as dandelions but the fact is thousands upon thousands acres of Utah's public lands are infested with noxious weeds.

Noxious weeds are a serious problem in the western United States and are rapidly spreading at a estimated rate of 14 percent each year. These weeds, many of them introduced by early settlers, interfere with the growth of useful plants, clog waterways and in some cases, can even threaten the lives of animals which feed on them. Species like Leafy Spurge, Squarrose Knapweed, Russian Knapweed, Musk Thistle, Dalmatian Toadflax, Purple Loosestrife, and many others, are alien to the United States and have no natural enemies to keep the population in balance.

"Among other things, widespread infestations can lead to soil erosion and stream sedimentation," explains Larry Maxfield, Utah BLM State Office Range Conservationist. "These noxious weeds impact revegetation efforts by out-competing desirable species, they reduce wild and domestic grazing capacities, can occasionally irritate public land users by aggravating allergies, and certainly threaten our federally protected plants and animals."

The solution:

Back in 1994, to halt the spread of noxious weeds into backcountry areas, a program was started to ban the use of single ingredient feeds which were not certified to be free of noxious weed seeds. This program has evolved to the point where on February 11, 2003, Jack G. Troyer, the Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region of the U. S. Forest Service signed order number 04-00-097 which prohibited **possessing, storing or transporting, non-pelletized hay, straw or mulch on National Forest System Lands without having each individual bale or container tagged or marked as weed free, or having original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present.**

Any violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization and/or imprisonment for not more than six months.

The effect of this prohibition is horsemen (as well as hunters, woolgrowers, cattle ranchers, government trappers, conservation officers, forest rangers and anyone else who transports feed) are required to use "certified noxious weed-free feed". Utah grown feed which has been certified will have a tag attached stating the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has inspected it. The states of Colorado, Idaho,

Utah's 18 most wanted

- Bermuda grass
- Bindweed (morning glory)
- Broadleaved Peppergrass
- Canada Thistle
- Dyer's Woad
- Johnson grass
- Leafy Spurge
- Musk Thistle
- Russian Knapweed
- Scotch Thistle
- Whitetop
- Squarrose Knapweed
- Diffuse Knapweed
- Yellow Starthistle
- Medusahead Rye
- Spotted Knapweed
- Purple Loosestrife

Certified weed-free tag

Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Utah have agreed to accept each other's certification tags.

Other approved products for livestock feed on public lands include pellets, hay cubes, processed and certified hay available at some feed stores in Utah. Grains are not included in this order.

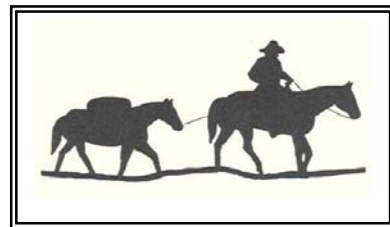
A commercially prepared feed containing more than one ingredient is defined as a "commercial feed" and falls under a different set of regulations. These feeds meet other standards and have already been inspected so they are exempt from this Forest Service ban.

While not covered by this specific order, the ban on non-certified hay, straw and mulch also applies to lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Your questions should be directed to your County Weed Supervisor or Agricultural Inspector.

This order applies to the Ashley, Boise, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Dixie, Fishlake, Humboldt-Toiyabe, Manti-LaSal, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, Uinta and Wasatch-Cache National Forests.

The Greater Yellowstone area in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming (including National Forest System Lands, Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park as well as Park and Teton counties in Wyoming) also require the use of certified forage.



Bridgerland Back Country Horsemen
Steve Guymon, Education Chair