



Teasel (left; photo courtesy of US Dept. of Agriculture) and Old World Caucasian Bluestem (right; photo courtesy of The Noble Foundation)

## Update to the Noxious Weed Law

*By Emily Wilder, Kansas LTAP*

Local agencies in Kansas must remove noxious weeds from land they own, including roadsides. The Kansas Noxious Weed Law was updated last October to allow the creation of a state noxious weed advisory committee. This article will briefly discuss the committee, its organization and duties, and two weeds that are likely to be reviewed by this committee, for possible additions to the State's noxious weeds list.

### **State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee Breakdown**

The committee will consist of 13 voting members and the Secretary of Agriculture as a non-voting ex officio member. Members will be appointed by the Secretary to represent the different geographic areas of the state as equally as possible and will consist of the following breakdown:

- One natural resource management professional from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
- Two weed specialists from Kansas State University with one having knowledge of non-chemical methods of weed control
- One county commissioner recommended by the Kansas Association of Counties
- Two weed supervisors recommended by the board of directors of the County Weed Director's Association of Kansas
- Four private landowners involved in agricultural production, to include:
  - At least one traditional Kansas grower
  - At least one non-traditional grower

- At least one certified organic producer
- One representative of the agricultural industries in Kansas recommended by the board of directors of the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
- One appointee upon the recommendation of the Kansas Biological Survey
- One appointee upon the recommendation of the board of the directors of the Kansas Cooperative Council

### **Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee**

The advisory committee will, among other duties assigned by the Secretary:

- Recommend the designation and classification of noxious weeds in the state through the use of a risk assessment designated by the Secretary
- Review the noxious weed act and the rules and regulations of the Secretary declaring species of plants to be noxious weeds at least every four years and recommend changes to the Secretary
- Review the official methods for the control and eradication for each species of plant declared a noxious weed and recommend changes to the Secretary that include both chemical and non-chemical options for such control and eradication
- Before January 1 of each odd-numbered year, report to the Secretary on: (A) the expenditure of state funds on noxious weed control and how such funds were spent; (B) the status of the state and county noxious weed control programs; (C) recommendations for the continued best use of state funds for noxious weed control; and recommendations on long term noxious weed control needs
- The state advisory committee shall only make recommendations approved by a majority vote of the members

So, what's on their agenda to review?

### **Teasel and Old World Caucasian Bluestem**

It's expected that the committee, once formed, will review two weeds: Teasel and Old World Caucasian Bluestem. There is a lot of pressure from other organizations for these specific weeds to be reviewed and they may be added to the noxious weed law.

#### **Description of Teasel**

Teasel is a short-lived perennial plant that grows three to eight feet tall and has prickly stems and leaves with a purple or lavender flower that forms on a head at the end of the stem. The first flowers begin opening in a belt around the middle of the oval flower head. Teasel seeds mature in mid-autumn and are an important winter food for some birds. An average teasel plant produces about 3300 seeds. The leaves are shiny green rosette, with scalloped edges that form a saucer-like shape around the stem.

#### **Control Practices for Teasel**

When teasel is still a young rosette, it can be dug up and disposed of, but once the plant flowers the head must be cut off and disposed of before seeding, then the stalk can be removed. Spot spraying

herbicides can help to control teasel and 2,4-D Amine should not harm the lawns around the teasel if used correctly. Herbicides can be applied after bolting and again in the late fall. If you plan to use glyphosate, it will kill anything green, so please read the directions carefully.

### **Description of Old World Caucasian Bluestem**

Old World Caucasian Bluestem is an invasive blue-gray grass that grows to three feet tall with dense tufts of leaf blades. It can be found in many different habitats, spreads by both root and seed, and can be very difficult to eradicate once established. Unfortunately, Bluestem alters the soil chemistry, inhibiting the growth of native plants.

### **Control Practices for Old World Caucasian Bluestem**

Old World Caucasian Bluestem is difficult to control and one application will not solve the problem. Some possible options include spot or broadcast spray with glyphosate and wiping or wicking glyphosate. Tillage and planting roundup ready crops, as well as, burning or mowing prior to herbicide application may help also.

### **Sensitive Crops**

If you are going to spray, be aware of any and all crops in and around your spray zone. Kansas is home to many sensitive crops including berries, grapes, orchards, as well as bees and more. There is increasing concern among Kansas growers of drift damage from the use of pesticides. Each Public Works agency should be aware of sensitive crops in the area and disseminate that information to resident and township sprayers. Further information on sensitive crop locations can be found at <https://driftwatch.org/>.

This article was adapted from a presentation created by Douglas County Noxious Weed Director, Alan Hollinger.

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