

QUICK FACTS

WEED FREE FORAGE



Invasive species, such as terrestrial plants, can degrade natural areas, decrease biodiversity, and reduce habitat for wildlife. They cost Alberta an estimated \$1 billion per year. Contaminated hay is one means by which invasive species are spread. Through the Alberta Certified Weed Free Forage program, producers can have their forage inspected and certified as weed-free.

CERTIFIED WEED FREE FORAGE

This program is designed to limit the spread of invasive plant species through contaminated forage and to provide assurance to all participants that forage certified through this program meets a minimum acceptable standard. Here's how you can participate:

- 1. Become a Certified Weed Free Forage producer!** Have your fields certified as 'weed-free' and sell your product to buyers. Contact your local Agricultural Fieldman or the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) for details.
- 2. Spread the word, not the plant!** Help us protect Alberta from the harmful impacts of invasive species by asking for and purchasing Certified Weed Free Forage.



Certified product marked with specialized twine



Invasive plant near forage

WEED FREE FORAGE QUICK FACTS:

- Use of Certified Weed Free Forage is a best management practice, benefiting both private and public land managers. Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species is one of the most effective ways to manage them.
- There is a growing demand for forage that has been inspected and certified as 'weed-free', especially for use in protected areas and parks. The Alberta Certified Weed Free Forage program offers producers a way to certify that their product is weed-free and to provide a premium product.
- Certified Weed Free Forage is any forage product that was grown in fields that were inspected and found to be free of any viable seed or reproductive plant parts of any species identified in the North American Invasive Species Management Association's Weed Free Forage Minimum Certification Standards and the Alberta Weed Control Act.
- Certified Weed Free Forage can be beneficial to purchase and/or produce as it can be a preferred product choice, bring a premium when sold, prevent invasive species from spreading and becoming established in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Participating municipalities and counties offer weed-free forage inspection and certification to producers. Participation is voluntary. If you produce in an area that is not participating in the program, please contact your local Agricultural Fieldman or the AISC.
- Inspections are conducted by Certified Weed Free Forage Inspectors who walk throughout the field and forage storage area, identifying all plant species present. Forage stands must be inspected a maximum of 10 days prior to cutting. If a crop is not cut within 10 days, a new inspection must be completed. Inspections are conducted on a field-by-field basis.
- Some invasive species can be present, provided there are no plant propagules (e.g., flowers, seed heads, root fragments) present that would enter the baled product.
- Producers must purchase specialized twine for marking the bales as certified. The baled product must be stored and transported separately from non-certified forage in order for the product to maintain weed-free status.
- A list of contact information for producers with an inventory of Certified Weed Free Forage will be publicly available online on the AISC's website. Please contact the AISC if you would like to be added to that list.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT ABINVASIVES.CA