

## Weed Control in Forage Crops

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### Weed control is another important part of raising forage and hay.

When designing a weed control program, there is important knowledge to keep in mind.

### Weeds are a symptom, not a problem.

The increase of weed populations in a pasture is usually a product of lack of competition from forage grass. Drought, close grazing and low soil fertility causes weakened forage grasses which allow weeds the competitive advantage, resulting in their increased population.

### Most weeds treated with herbicides should be sprayed when they are small (1 to 4 inches) and actively growing.

a) 3/4 lb. of 2,4-D will control most of the annual and some of the perennial

weeds when they are treated in the 1 to 4 inch stage of growth. As they become larger, the addition of Dicamba, Picloram, Metsulfuron and Trisulfuron is needed to give the kind of control desired. It will, also, sometimes double the cost of the herbicide needed.

b) Weeds should only be treated when the air temperature is above 60 degrees and the plants have had enough rainfall to be growing rapidly. A cold and/or drought stricken weed will not absorb enough herbicide to kill it.

### Advantages for products other than 2,4-D amine

a) Weeds too large, as weeds grow in height and mature they become more difficult and costly to control requiring more potent chemicals.

b) When weeds are stress

-ed by drought, they are not actively growing and will not take up the herbicide as readily.

c) Some weed species like Horsenettle and ironweed are by their nature harder to control than other pasture weeds.

d) Sometimes other chemicals and combinations of chemicals can provide the same control at a comparable price.

### **Remember, good timing can save money!**

This savings will allow you the opportunity to spend more on fertility and allow the forage grasses to take advantage of the absence of the weeds.

**Always read and follow all label directions before applying herbicides in a weed control program.**

## EPA Grants Specific Exemption for Sandbur Control in Pastures

One of the most often asked questions of me from ag producers in Pottawatomie County is what to do about sandburs. This pesky weed invades pastures, especially in areas that the grass is not extremely competitive.

Ranchers and hay producers on sandy soils have another tool in their fight against sandburs, at least temporarily. On Thursday, the EPA granted the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry's request for a Section 18 Specific Exemption

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allowing the use of the herbicide *Prowl H2O*® (*pendimethalin*) for control of sandburs in Bermudagrass pastures and hay fields. The exemption expires June 30<sup>th</sup>, and is only for growers in Oklahoma. This is the second year in a row the EPA has granted this specific exemption, but last year's notification came only a few weeks before the expiration and very few producers had a chance to take advantage of it.

Pendimethalin is a widely used pre-emergent herbicide in turf grass and certain field crops, but does not have permanent label registration status for use on pastures and hay fields. However, permanent registration of *Prowl H2O*® for pasture use may be on the not-too-distant horizon. In Thursday's letter to Oklahoma Agriculture Commissioner Terry Peach, EPA Pesticide Programs Director Debra Edwards acknowledged that *Prowl H2O*'s manufacturer, BASF Corporation, has completed field residue trials and submitted a residue tolerance peti-

tion for establishment of full label registration for use on Bermudagrass pastures and hay fields.

Although the exemption extends through June, growers planning to use *Prowl H2O* on pastures and hay meadows should plan to get it applied before sandburs begin to germinate, which is likely to occur by early April. Since *pendimethalin* is a pre-emergent product, it is only effective on seedlings during the germination stage.

Under the terms of the exemption, grazing and harvesting of hay from treated areas is not permitted for 40 days after application. The application rate allowed is from 2.1 to 3.2 quarts per acre, and may only be applied with a low boom sprayer. Application with a boomless nozzle is not permitted, nor is aerial application. The lower end of the rate should be used on very sandy soils and soils with low organic matter content. Less sandy soils, such as loams, may need an application rate toward the higher end. Anyone who applies *Prowl H2O*® for this use must comply with all the provisions and precautions on the full perma-

nent label, as well as those listed for this specific exemption.

Only one herbicide currently has full label clearance for sandbur control in Bermudagrass pastures and hay meadows. It is *Journey*®, also manufactured by BASF. *Journey* is a post-emergence herbicide which should be applied after sandbur plants are up and growing, but before the burs begin to form. Its disadvantage is that it temporarily slows or stops growth of the Bermudagrass for a significant portion of the growing season.

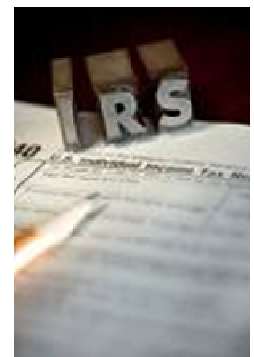
Chemical control is not the only management tool important in controlling sandburs in pastures and hay fields. Having a dense, vigorous stand of grass to provide competition, proper fertility, and prescribed burning in the late summer or fall to reduce seed populations are some of the other important management practices for effective sandbur control.

## Settling Your Tax Debt

In 2004, the Internal Revenue Service issued a consumer alert advising taxpayers to be aware of promoters claiming that they can settle your tax debt for "pennies on the dollar" through the Offer in Compromise Program. Extensive media campaigns have continued advising people who are having difficulty paying their tax debt to contact them and they will help get the IRS debt reduced or even eliminated.

Before contacting these companies, there are a variety of things taxpayers need to be aware of. If the promoter is asking for a retainer before anyone will discuss the problem with you, please consider the fact that you may already be at a cash disadvantage and they may not be able to help you. You should work with your current tax advisor first to determine if you qualify for the program before pursuing anyone to assist you. They know of ways to help you work with the IRS to get relief.

The IRS has been authorized to settle federal tax liabilities by accepting less than full payment of the tax debt under certain circumstances. Some options that exist to most taxpayers who are experiencing difficulty paying off their tax debt may be to establish



## Tax Debt—Cont'd

an installment agreement to pay the liability or make an offer in compromise to pay a reasonable amount of the tax liability after determining how much you can afford to pay.

There are three situations where the IRS may accept an offer in compromise. The first situation involves the situation where it is unlikely that the taxpayer could ever pay the full amount of the tax liability owed before the statutory period for collection ends. The second situation occurs if there is a question that the assessed tax liability is correct. The third situation occurs where a financial hardship could occur if the taxpayer paid the full amount of the tax liability.

For additional information about the Offer in Compromise program, visit <http://www.irs.gov/> and search for "What is an Offer in Compromise". In addition contact your tax advisor for assistance.

## Pecan Production and Maintenance Program Scheduled

On **Monday, March 30, 6:30 p.m.** the **OSU Extension Center** will offer a seminar on Pecan Production and Maintenance. It will be held in the OSU Cowboy Classroom located at **14001 Acme Road**, corner of Acme Road and MacArthur, in Shawnee.

The discussion will be aimed at homeowner and backyard pecan production but will also offer information that would be helpful to those with small commercial orchards. Topics will include planting new trees and their care, variety selection, fertilization, disease and insect control.

The program is free and open to all.

Mark your calendar!



## Beef Quality Assurance Training Planned

On **Thursday, April 30, 6:00 p.m.** at **Tecumseh City Hall**, the Pottawatomie Cattle Producers Association and the OSU Extension Center will conduct a "Beef Quality Assurance" training. The Beef Industry Council and the Extension Service are cooperating on trainings throughout the state on Best Management Practices for beef producers. These will include processing and treatment with health care medicines, carcass composition and quality, care and husbandry practices, nutrition and record keeping. The program will last over two hours so you will notice a time and location change for this meeting.

Pottawatomie County Farm Bureau will be sponsoring the meal. We will need an earlier RSVP than normal because of materials that must be ordered from the Beef Industry Council and for the meal count. Please RSVP by calling **273-7683** by **April 21st**.

This program encompasses most aspects of the beef program and will be useful to all beef producers, whether you are a young person showing at the Junior Livestock Show or a large producer making a living in the beef business. The program is free and open to all interested.

## Management Options for Controlling "Invasive" Thistles

With the arrival of spring, the weeds are starting to grow vigorously. Perhaps the weeds of greatest impact in our yards and fields are the thistles. Although we have several native species of thistle in Oklahoma, there are 5 classified as "invasive" species. The Oklahoma Thistle Law requires a "Plan of Action" for control of "invasive" species in all counties. The Distaff and Canada thistle currently have no infestations in the state. The Scotch thistle is found primarily in the western part of the state and is difficult to control

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## Thistles-Cont'd

with herbicides. Bull thistle is found throughout the state, but is seldom a problem as insects that feed on native species also keep the Bull thistle in check. The Musk thistle is common in the northeastern and central counties of Oklahoma. Populations of musk thistle can be a problem. An integrated program with herbicides, mechanical and biological control can be utilized to successfully control Musk thistle. For information on identifying thistles, see the OCES factsheet PSS-2776.

**Now is the time to use herbicides to control thistles.** With the warming weather and rain, the thistles are moving from the overwintering rosette stage and are starting to produce the upright flower stalks. Both the rosettes and the bolted plants should be sprayed. Depending on which growth stage the thistles are in determines the herbicide that can be used for control. Not all herbicides can be used to control the Musk, Bull and Scotch thistles. However, Grazon P+D will control all three species at either growth stage and Weedmaster will control all three at the rosette stage and the Musk and Bull thistle at the bolting stage. For a complete list of registered herbicides, usage rates and expense level, see Table 1, OCES EPP-7318. This fact sheet also has information on the integrated control of thistles using biological or mechanical control and the best times to utilize these methods. The Musk Thistle Management Action List, OCES L-308 is a two page sheet that provides a good monthly summary actions to control thistles.

Mechanical control requires the use of tillage equipment, hoe or spade to cut the annual or biennial thistle off below the crown area. Mowing can prevent seed production, but the thistles must be cut off very close to the ground surface to be effective. If cut too high, the lower leaf axials can still produce late season blooms. If the mowing is delayed until the plants have begun blooming, some flowers will still produce viable seed.

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