

# Certified Weed Free Hay & Straw

- Provides access to new markets
- Adds value to crops
- Reduces the spread of noxious weeds
- Provides continuity between states

**One of the primary causes of the spread of noxious weeds in Kansas is through the movement of infested hay and straw.**

Kansas' Weed Free Certification program for forage and straw products was developed to help stop the spread of noxious and invasive weeds within Kansas and between states. It was also established to help provide producers access to new markets and to add value to their forage and straw.

This program is in compliance with standards put in place by the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) and is recognized by 22 states and the Province of Alberta, Canada.

These standards are designed to provide assurance to all producers and consumers that forage and mulch certified through this program meets minimally acceptable requirements and provides continuity between the states.

The USDA Forest Service and requires the use of certified forage on their lands and the Kansas Department of Transportation will only use certified straw mulch on their highway projects.

The North American Weed Management Association also allows the certification of gravel to provide assurance to construction and maintenance project managers that the gravel they will be using is free of noxious and invasive weeds.



## **Do I have to have my forage certified?**

No, the Weed Free Forage program is completely voluntary. We simply offer it as an option to those producers who are interested.

## **How do I certify my products as weed free?**

The procedure is easy, go to the Department of Agriculture's website at <http://agriculture.ks.gov/document-services/records-center> and fill out a "Request for Growing season Inspection-Including Weed Free Forage Inspection Export Service" form. A qualified inspector will contact you to set up a time for the inspection. He or she will inspect the perimeter and interior of your fields as well as your bale storage areas and equipment. The inspector will then explain the steps to follow after the inspection.

## **What does it cost to certify my product?**

You will be charged for the inspection, including travel time for the inspector, a fee for the bale tags required for identifying the certified bales and an optional charge for Transit Certificates if your buyer requires them.



## **When should I get my fields inspected?**

You are required to have your fields inspected no more than 10 days before being harvested or, if you are planning to harvest between November 15 and March 1, you have 20 days to be inspected before cutting. For wheat straw the straw must also be baled within the required time limit. The inspector will not inspect any crop that has already been cut.

## Does this mean I cannot have any weeds in my field?

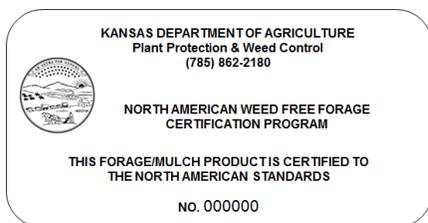
No, the inspector will be looking for a select list of 54 species restricted by the NAWMA standards plus Kansas' noxious weeds. While some of these weeds may not pose much of a problem here in Kansas, they are species of concern to the other participating states. If the inspector finds one of these weeds in your field and it is not budding, flowering or gone to seed, the field can still be certified. If it is in a reproductive stage, that area of your field will not be certified.

## As a consumer, do I have to buy certified products?

No this part of the program is also voluntary. Some federal agencies such as the Forest Service does require that all forage and straw transported onto lands that they manage be certified to NAWMA standards.

## How do I know if I am buying certified products?

Every producer receives a "Certificate of Inspection" after their fields have been inspected and baled. Ask to see a copy when you are considering buying bales advertised as certified. The forage will also be labeled with an official bale tag issued by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Other states may also issue a special purple and yellow baling twine for the producers to use that indicates the bale is certified.



## What do certified products cost?

The cost of certified products is not regulated by either the Kansas Department of Agriculture or NAWMA. Prices are set by the producers based upon supply and demand.

## Do certified products have higher quality or more nutritional value?

No, neither quality nor nutritive value are a factor in the certification process. The certification process does ensure that the straw and forage products you buy will not be contaminated with noxious or invasive weeds.



Spotted knapweed growing from a contaminated bale of straw.

## For more information, contact:

**Kansas Department of Agriculture**  
1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
(785) 564-6698

## Or visit:

**North American Weed Management Association**  
<http://www.nawma.org/WeedFree.html>

**Kansas Department of Agriculture**  
**Weed Free Forage Program**  
[www.agriculture.ks.gov/WeedFreeForage](http://www.agriculture.ks.gov/WeedFreeForage)

**Kansas Weed Free Forage Producers**  
[http://www.ksda.gov/includes/document\\_center/plant\\_protection/Miscellaneous\\_Plans\\_Reports\\_and\\_Guidelines/KansasWFFProducers.pdf](http://www.ksda.gov/includes/document_center/plant_protection/Miscellaneous_Plans_Reports_and_Guidelines/KansasWFFProducers.pdf)

