



Agricultural Services Department

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2019



Watershed Projects Lamont County

Lamont County is partnering with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) and the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) to initiate a project to build awareness and demonstrate management practices that can maintain and improve our watersheds and support our agricultural operations.

The watershed projects targeted in Lamont County would like to build partnerships with landowners and producers



that have cropping systems that border natural wetlands and other waterbodies. Lamont County and our partners will be working with producers on project designs and facilitation to implement the changes needed to protect these waterbodies.



Annual Farmer's Appreciation



On June 20, the Farmer's Appreciation Banquet was held at St. Michael Hall by the Agricultural Service Board. With 300 tickets sold, the banquet was a success, filling the hall to its capacity. The community showed up in their best attire, ready for great food, beer and wine, and dancing. Featured throughout the evening was a Ukrainian style buffet including everything from nachinka to Ukrainian sausage and an old-style Ukrainian band, Sparkling Tones, that provided music.

Speakers for the night included the MLA Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk and Tia Schram, who gave a speech on the importance of mental health, especially within farming communities where it is often seen as taboo to discuss. Special thanks to Bonnie Chudyk for putting the event together

Get to Know the ASB Staff

The Agriculture Service Board has 11 staff members, which include the Agricultural Fieldman, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman, ASB Administration Assistant, Mower Operators, Weed Inspectors, Vegetation Management, Pest Control, and Spray Truck Operator.

Throughout the summer there is a higher chance of running into our three summer students. You will likely see them inspecting properties for weeds, doing weed control, performing clubroot checks, or servicing insect traps. The three students include Elizabeth Thomas (Weed Inspector), Brett Weeks (Weed Inspector), and Maegan McCoy (Vegetation Management Technician).

When she's not working for the County, Elizabeth is an avid hunter and race enthusiast. Come September, she will be heading back to Lethbridge College for her 3rd year in the Conservation Officer program. By this time next summer, she hopes to be working as a Park Ranger somewhere in Western Canada. Brett Weeks spends his time off helping his parents on the family farm and tending to his garden. Though he has a passion for agriculture, Brett hopes to attend the E.M.T program at N.A.I.T. Finally, Maegan McCoy likes to spend her time off with her dog Willow and horse Spice. In the fall, Maegan is going back to finish her Veterinary Technician Program at Lakeland College in Vermillion.



Weed Inspection Information

It's no secret that weeds are annoying, especially when they put our crops and livestock at risk. Many prohibited noxious weeds are allelopathic, meaning they release a chemical that stops the growth of other plants around them. This can lead to loss of crop or an unhealthy pasture. This is part of why it's so important to stop the spread of prohibited noxious and noxious weeds. The *Alberta Weed Control Act* states "a person shall destroy a prohibited noxious weed that is on land the person owns or occupies" (*Alberta Weed Control Act*).



Common Tansy
(Noxious Weed)

Weeds of Concern in Lamont County:

Noxious Species – White Cockle, Common Tansy, Woolly Burdock, Tall Buttercup, Scentless Chamomile, Yellow Clematis, Yellow Toadflax, Common Mullein, Field Scabious, Creeping Bellflower, Canada Thistle and Perennial Sow Thistle.

Prohibited Noxious Species - Hoary Alyssum, Himalayan Balsam, Pale Yellow Iris, Orange Hawkweed, and Bighead Knapweed

Here are some facts about three prohibited noxious weeds that have been found in the county and are a concern. Orange hawkweed and pale yellow iris are new in Lamont County, and Himalayan balsam is an ongoing issue in Lamont County.

Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) is also known as fox-and-cubs. Orange hawkweed is native to Europe it was brought over to North America as an ornamental plant. This weed is listed as a prohibited noxious weed under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*. This plant can be identified by its red orange coloured flower and black coloured bracts. The plant can grow to about 10-60 cm in height. Orange hawkweed is known to take over open fields and the undergrowth in the forest. This

is done through seeds, creeping roots and rhizomatous roots. These plants thrive in well-drained areas that have a coarse textured soil.

There are two suggested options to controlling orange hawkweed: 1. herbicide application 2. mowing, but mowing is not highly recommended because the plant can reproduce through root fragments. It is unknown if orange hawkweed is toxic to grazing animals. Early control is imperative!



Pale yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) is also known as yellow flag, water flag, yellow iris and yellow flag iris. Under the *Alberta Weed Control Act* this weed is listed as prohibited noxious. This weed is native to Africa, Asia, and Europe, it was brought over to North America as an ornamental plant. It was soon noticed that this weed overtakes the native vegetation in water bodies and spreads rapidly. You can identify this plant by the distinct yellow flower with light brownish marks on the pedals.

Pale yellow iris is spread through seed dispersal, creeping root and rhizomatous roots. This plant can be difficult to destroy due to there being no registered herbicide options for pale yellow iris. Pale yellow iris can also be poisonous to livestock. The only control is hand picking or cutting repeatedly for a couple years. When dealing



with this weed be sure to wear long sleeves and gloves as it can irritate the skin. The best prevention is not to buy or grow pale yellow iris, it has been known that garden centers and online sites have sold pale yellow iris.

Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is also known as poor man's orchid, policeman's helmet, Indian balsam or ornamental jewelweed. Himalayan balsam is native to the western Himalayas in India; it was brought over to Northern America as a pond ornamental. This



weed is recorded in eight provinces in Canada and has been an issue since the early 1800s. Under the *Alberta Weed Control Act* the plant is listed as Prohibited Noxious. This weed can be identified by distinct pink to light pink flowers, which can look like touch-me-not flowers. The flower's stems are hollow, and they can grow to three meters tall. Himalayan balsam needs

some ground disturbance and moist soil; it is known that this plant thrives in wetlands. It can out-compete the native vegetation due to the plant being allelopathic. The main source of this plant spreading is through its seed dispersal; one plant can produce 700-800 seeds, and the seeds can be shot to about 10 meters away from the original plant.



There are some control options to get rid of Himalayan balsam: 1. handpicking 2. grazing 3. cultivation. It is easy to handpick this weed as it has a very shallow root system. Cattle and sheep have been known to graze on Himalayan balsam, but there is better forage for these animals. Cultivation can be an effective way to control these weeds but is not practical in wetlands.

Noxious Weed Management in Hay and Pasture

The two most common noxious weeds found in hay and pastures are tall buttercup and white cockle. These weeds are listed as noxious under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*. Not only are these weeds listed under the act, they can have a detrimental impact to the forage and hay value on that property.

Tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) should be avoided for grazing. It contains a bitter, irritating oil that can cause blisters on the mouth and skin and can poison animals when leaves and stems of growing plants are consumed; poisoning could be as severe as death. This avoidance causes it to dominate. It prefers moist low areas and can expand quickly in wet years.



Control measures include: 1. a competitive forage or hay stand 2. seeding to annual crop for several years to control 3. mowing 4. herbicide application

White cockle (*Lychnis alba syn. Silene alba S. latifolia*) is a short-lived perennial that can get spread by seed in baled forages. White cockle produces a significant amount of seeds and can spread beyond a taproot with lateral roots. This plant cannot be grazed and is not a good forage plant.



Control measures include: 1. mowing 2. herbicide application.

Having a competitive pasture with a healthy grass and legume stand will significantly reduce weed populations. Over-grazing can lead to an increase in weed species, which can take over the entire pasture area. Controlling weeds in pastureland, though sometimes difficult, will increase the quality of hay and the forage value for your livestock, in the long run.

Everyone needs to work together to control invasive weeds and protect the land within Lamont County.

Spray Program FAQs

The spray program for roadside and brush commenced June 1, 2019.

How often are the right-of-ways sprayed?

Lamont County's vegetation management program for ROWs is on a 3-year rotation for weed control. Spot applications could be done more frequently if there is a problem area. Brush control is done to maintain visibility and reduce encroachment on the roadside.

Are the herbicides applied by Lamont County safe?

Yes, the herbicides Lamont County uses are safe when used according to label directions. All applicators must be a licensed pesticide applicator or authorized assistant that takes training to become certified in use and industry requirements. Before an herbicide can be sold in Canada it must be registered by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, a division of Health Canada.

Why do we spray for general weeds and brush?

Under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*, the Agriculture Service Boards are directed to eradicate any found prohibited noxious weeds and control noxious weeds. These weeds are deemed a concern for the environment and threaten biodiversity. Non-regulated invasive plants can impede agricultural production and outcompete crops. Brush control is important to maintain safe ROWs including the reduction of hazards and sightline issues. It is important for aiding snow removal, grade issues and to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions.



Dame's Rocket (Noxious Weed)

We would love to hear from you!

If you have any questions about any content or would like more information on our programs, please contact the Agricultural Services Department at: 780-895-2585 or lindsay.b@lamontcounty.ca.

Our programs and upcoming events can be found at: <http://www.lamontcounty.ca/Agricultural-Services>