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## Stop Noxious Weeds: It's the Law!

Cooperative Extension Service  
*South Dakota State University*

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## It's the Law

The South Dakota Weed and Pest Commission is responsible for developing and implementing a statewide program. South Dakota statute requires every landowner to control noxious weeds on their land. The laws and regulations are enforced by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Every landowner should voluntarily practice control as necessary to prevent spread.

## The Law Can Be Enforced

State law provides enforcement procedures to be used when landowners fail to comply. Uncontrolled noxious weeds that present a nuisance to area lands should be reported to county weed and pest officials. Failure to comply initiates a formal process that could result in fines, tax levies, and liens against the lands of the owner.

## Noxious Weed Characteristics

A noxious weed must possess the following characteristics to be declared noxious statewide:

- The weed is perennial.
- The weed is capable of spreading by underground parts and by seed.
- The weed is not controlled by normal management operations and requires special chemical and cultural practices.
- The weed is capable of decreasing the value of the land and impeding the general welfare of the people of the state.
- The weed is not native to South Dakota

## Locally Noxious Weeds

Weeds may be designated locally noxious upon request from counties. Locally noxious weeds have the following characteristics:

- The weed is biennial, perennial, or a pernicious annual.
- The weed is capable of spreading rapidly.
- The weed is not controllable by normal management operations and requires special chemical and cultural practices.
- The weed is capable of materially reducing production of crop and livestock.
- The weed is capable of decreasing the value of land and impeding the general welfare of the people of the county.

## Noxious Weed information

The Cooperative Extension Service provides information on identification and control programs.

- South Dakota Weeds
- FS 525—"Noxious Weed Control"
- Noxious Weed Field Data—Mimeo
- ESS 34, "Noxious Weeds of South Dakota"
- ExEx 8133, "Biocontrol of Noxious Weeds in South Dakota"

## Noxious Weed Contacts

Local Cooperative Extension Office  
or  
County Weed and Pest Supervisor

**South Dakota State University**  
**College of Agriculture & Biological Sciences**  
**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**South Dakota Department of Agriculture**



**Program support from South Dakota**  
**Weed and Pest Control Commission**

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**IT'S THE LAW**

*Good  
Neighbors  
Control  
Noxious  
Weeds*

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

## Noxious Weed Problem is BIG

Acres of noxious weed infestations reported by County Weed and Pest Boards, South Dakota, 2002.

<b>NOXIOUS WEEDS</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Field bindweed	2,318,032
Leafy spurge	317,859
Canada thistle	1,774,251
Perennial sow thistle	169,091
Hoary cress	8,241
Russian knapweed	5,139
Purple loosestrife	804

<b>LOCAL NOXIOUS WEEDS</b>	
Musk/plumeless thistle	427,493
Absinth wormwood	210,996

## Noxious Weeds Are Expensive

Value of lost production if not controlled in South Dakota cropland, pasture, and rangeland (Noxious Weeds/acres.losses.,return, 2001):

- Over \$140,000,000 loss in production from statewide noxious weeds.
- Over 1,500,000 of noncrop land infested.

Infestations affect crops and pasture/rangeland.

- 62% of field bindweed is in field crops.
- 63% of Canada thistle is in crops and grasslands.
- 65% of leafy spurge is in grassland.

Canada thistle costs the state \$47,881,674 in lost production.

Biennial thistles and absinth wormwood cost producers over \$20,000,000 due to lost production.

Controlling statewide noxious weeds will return \$1.14 for every \$1.00 invested.

## Local Noxious Weeds

Weeds listed below have been designated as a Local Noxious Weed in one or more counties in South Dakota. Consult county weed and pest officials to determine designation in specific counties.

<i>Musk thistle</i>	<i>Common mullein</i>
<i>Plumeless thistle</i>	<i>St. Johnswort</i>
<i>Bull thistle</i>	<i>Common tansy</i>
<i>Scotch thistle</i>	<i>Dalmatian toadflax</i>
<i>Absinth wormwood</i>	<i>Yellow toadflax</i>
<i>Spotted knapweed</i>	<i>Houndstongue</i>
<i>Diffuse knapweed</i>	<i>Puncture vine</i>
<i>Common burdock</i>	<i>Chicory</i>
<i>Salt cedar</i>	

## Noxious Weed Facts

- Perennial sow thistle infestations have increased 500% in 10 years.
- Individual musk thistle flowers can produce up to 1500 seeds.
- Five Canada thistle plants per square yard can produce 121,000,000 seeds per acre or 2,777 seeds per square foot.
- Canada thistle seed may be viable for 4 years in fresh water.
- Wind will carry Canada thistle seed over a half mile.
- A leafy spurge seedling will produce a 24-foot patch in 4 years.
- Leafy spurge can produce 1,440 visible buds after 2 years.
- Roots of leafy spurge, field bindweed and Canada thistle may be 20 feet deep.
- Canada thistle seed will be viable 7–10 days after first flower color.
- Canada thistle roots contain 1.5 years supply of food reserves.
- Field bindweed seed lives for more than 50 years.
- Field bindweed seedlings will produce new shoots 50 days after emergence.
- Field bindweed seed is viable 10–15 days after pollination.
- One-third of field bindweed roots are below 2 feet.
- There may be 3.5 tons of roots per acre under established field bindweed.
- All noxious weeds are introduced species.

## Control Program Ideas

An effective control program prevents seeding and weakens the plant so the noxious weed stand is reduced or eliminated.

- Use alfalfa for Canada thistle. Weaken the stand before seeding forages.
- Use sweep or blade tillage at 4-week intervals after grain harvest up to freezeup.
- Mow or cultivate during the season to prevent seeding; apply herbicides to regrowth in late fall.
- Control seed nurseries in fencelines and waste areas. Fall is a good time to start. Use herbicide rates that reduce the stand.
- Use herbicides in crops to prevent seeding. Follow with post-harvest treatments.
- Watch for new patches along roadsides. New infestations are easier to eliminate.
- Close-drilled, competitive forage or cover crops hold weeds in check. Till or spray before planting and after harvest.
- Till or spray patches in fields.
- Consider fall roadside herbicide program.
- Spring and fall retreatment is required to reduce stands with 2,4-D.
- Release approved biological control agents in areas where they can successfully be established and herbicide treatments are not practical.
- Use fall herbicides if rosettes of biennial thistles are present or spray in spring before plants bolt.
- Consider preharvest herbicide after corn reaches dough stage.
- Purchase a small portable sprayer for small patches. Distribute biocontrol agents in sites where they will establish. Chop or mow scattered thistle plants.
- Use herbicides after corn or sorghum silage harvest.