



**WISCONSIN  
NOXIOUS WEED FREE  
FORAGE AND MULCH  
CERTIFICATION  
STANDARDS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a growing demand in North America for the use of certified noxious weed free forage and mulch as a preventive program to limit the spread of noxious weeds. This voluntary certification program is designed to assure that forage (hay, cubes, and pellets) and mulch sold with proper certification identification meets minimum standards designed to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Buyers are provided assurance that forage and mulch certified through this program meet these minimum standards.

These certification standards comply with the North American Weed Free Forage Certification Standards developed by the Regional Weed Free Forage Committee of the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA), formerly Weed Management Association (NAWMA). The Regional Weed Free Forage Committee has established minimum standards to allow uniform participation by states and provinces in the program. The Wisconsin Crop Improvement Association's (WCIA) forage and mulch certification program with proper certification markings attached will be eligible to be shipped into restricted areas in the United States and Canada where only forage and mulch certified under the Regional Forage Certification Standards can be used.

The production and distribution of certified material depends on the integrity of those participating in the program. It is the responsibility of every member of WCIA to abide by the rules, adhere to the standards, and report irregularities or violations. The various inspections and site visits are an integral part of this program minimize the opportunity for misleading or fraudulent actions on the part of the applicants participating in the program.

The WCIA Board of Directors will act on any case where WCIA rules established are knowingly or intentionally violated. Action taken by the WCIA Board of Directors may result in suspension of WCIA membership. Any applicant whose reputation is deemed unsatisfactory will be refused field inspection and other WCIA privileges.

## **APPLICATION FOR FIELD AND STORAGE SITE INSPECTION**

Weed free forage and mulch field inspection applications must be received before the application deadline. It is important for the applicant to contact WCIA for information regarding the early June application deadline. Forage field inspection applications must be received 4 weeks prior to cutting. Late applications may result in the field inspection not being completed without delaying harvest. If inspections for late applications can be arranged, a late fee will be assessed.

1. Field. A field is defined as the area occupied by one crop, covered by one inspection report and not divided by streams, public roads, other crops, or other barriers that materially increase the difficulty of inspection. If the certified forage or mulch field is also being inspected for certified seed production, indicate the corresponding seed production field number on the application form.

2. Storage Site. A storage site is defined as any location where harvested certified forage or mulch will be stored pending sale.

## FIELD AND STORAGE SITE INSPECTIONS

1. Field. To be eligible for forage or mulch certification, fields must be inspected by a WCIA representative before any type of harvest operation is performed. A crop that is harvested prior to inspection is not eligible for certification. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the crop has been inspected before harvest. Field inspection is a thorough examination of the forage or mulch production site to confirm compliance with the certification standards. A visual inspection of the field and entire field border will be made by the inspector. WCIA's inspection procedures will follow the guidelines established by the Regional Weed Free Forage Standards (as identified in **Appendix B**).
2. Storage Site. Storage sites for bales of certified forage or mulch must be inspected prior to being filled. The inspection is conducted to determine that they do not contain noxious weed and undesirable species propagating plant parts or seeds and are free of other materials that could harbor such seeds or reproductive plant parts.

## FIELD AND STORAGE SITE STANDARDS

Forage and mulch fields and storage sites shall be free of those noxious weeds and undesirable plant species identified in **Appendix A**.

1. Forage and mulch fields of origin and storage sites shall be inspected by WCIA.
2. Fields of origin shall include the surrounding ditches, fence rows, roads, easements, grass waterways, or a buffer zone surrounding the field in addition to the field itself.
3. Fields and storage sites must be inspected by WCIA prior to cutting/harvesting the fields and putting bales into storage.
4. Fields and storage sites which contain noxious weeds or undesirable plant species (as identified in **Appendix A**) may be certified if the following requirements are met.
  - A. The noxious weeds and undesirable plant species in the field in which the forage or mulch is being produced were treated to prevent seed formation or seed ripening to the degree that there is no danger of dissemination of the seed or the propagating parts of the plant capable of producing a new plant.
  - B. The noxious weeds and undesirable plant species were treated not later than the rosette to bud stage (or boot stage for grass species classified as weeds) prior to cutting/harvesting and storage.

C. The treatment method can include but is not limited to the following methods.

- i. Burning
- ii. Mowing or cutting
- iii. Roguing
- iv. Chemicals

D. If noxious weeds have not been treated and are present in areas adjacent to the field, an isolation/buffer strip must be established between the crop to be harvested and the area infested with noxious weeds. This strip must be no less than 10 feet wide. The strip can be established by mowing or cultivation.

E. Storage sites are cleaned so that all noxious weed and undesirable plant species seeds and propagating plant parts or materials which could house these are removed.

F. Outdoor storage sites must be covered with a tarp material sufficient to prevent new growth of plants from the soil underneath.

5. Pellets and pelleted milled feeds must be certified in the field of origin if heat is not used in the process. If heat is used in the processing, pellets and pelleted milled feeds may be certified based on official testing by the WCIA seed laboratory for weed seed viability.

6. An "Inspection Certificate" shall be issued by WCIA indicating that the above requirements have been met based upon field/storage site inspections.

## **MAINTAINING IDENTITY OF HARVESTED FORAGE**

The applicant must keep accurate records of the amount of forage or mulch harvested from each field including where the forage or mulch is stored after harvest. The following records must be maintained and be made available at the request of WCIA.

1. The number and average weight of bales harvested.
2. The exact location where bales are stored.
3. Date of harvest.
4. Field number and location of the field where the product was produced.
5. Copies of all certification documents.
6. Current inventory records.

In addition, each producer is held responsible for adhering to the following guidelines/deadlines.

1. The "Inspection Certificates" documenting the inspector's field inspection work and the harvest date, number of bales and average bale weight must be completed and returned to WCIA within the appropriate time frame.
  - A. Prior to the issuing of certification tags.
  - B. Within 2 weeks of harvest if NAWMA colored twine is used.
  - C. No later than December 31 of the year of harvest when standard twine is used.
2. Failure to complete and return "Inspection Certificates" by the December 31 date will forfeit certification of the forage/mulch harvested from the fields for which certificates were not completed and returned.
3. Failure to complete and return "Inspection Certificates" within 2 weeks of harvest if NAWMA colored twine is used will require an onsite inspection with appropriate hourly and travel charges.

## **CERTIFICATION MARKINGS**

Certification tags will be issued for eligible forage or mulch upon request by the producer. Bales must have a certification tag attached or be tied with NAWMA approved colored twine in order to be marketed as Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage or Mulch.

1. Large square or round bales must be labeled with certification tags.
2. Small bales (60 lbs or less) must be labeled with certification tags or tied with NAWMA approved colored twine.
3. Certification tags have a self adhesive backing and one tag is placed around the twine on each bale.

If bales meet the additional Wisconsin DOT/DNR standards that will be stated on the certification tag.

## **CERTIFICATION TAG REQUESTS**

Producers must request certification tags prior to moving bales into the market place. Certification tags may be requested on the "Inspection Certificates" when declaring the weight and number of bales harvested from each individual field or at a later date.

## APPENDIX A

### Regional Designated Noxious Weed and Undesirable Plant List

The following weeds have been designated as noxious or undesirable in the Regional Weed Free Forage Certification Standards:

1. Absinth Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*)
  2. Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*)
  3. Buffalobur (*Solanum rostratum*)
  4. Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
  5. Common burdock (*Arctium minus*)
  6. Common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*)
  7. Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)
  8. Dalmatian toad flax (*Linaria dalmatica*)
  9. Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)
  10. Dyers woad (*Isatis tinctoria*)
  11. Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
  12. Hemp (*marijuana*)(*Cannabis sativa*)
  13. Henbane, Black (*Hyoscyamus niger*)
  14. Hoary cress (*Cardaria* spp.)
  15. Horsenettle (*Solanum carolinense*)
  16. Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale* L)
  17. Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*)
  18. Jointed Goatgrass (*Aegilops cylindrical*)
  19. Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
  20. Matgrass (*Nardus stricta*)
  21. Meadow hawkweed complex (*Hieracium caespitosum* H.  
*floribundum*, *H. piloselloides*)
  22. Meadow knapweed (*Centaurea pratensis*)
  23. Medusa head (*Taeniatherum caputmedusae*)
  24. Miliun (*Milium vernale*)
  25. Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*)
  26. Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium auranthiacum*)
  27. Oxeye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)
  28. Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*)
  29. Perennial sorghum (*Sorghum almum*)
  30. Perennial sowthistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
  31. Plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*)
  32. Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)
  33. Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*)
  34. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
  35. Quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*)
  36. Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*)
  37. Russian knapweed (*Centaurea repens*)
  38. Scentless chamomile (*Matricaria maritima*)
  39. Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)
  40. Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*)
  41. Sericea Lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*)
  42. Silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*)
  43. Skeletonleafbursage (*Ambrosia tomentosa*)
  44. Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
  45. Squarrose knapweed (*Centaurea virgata*)
  46. St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
  47. Sulfur cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*)
  48. Syrian beancaper (*Zygophllum fabago* L)
  49. Tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*)
  50. Tansy ragwort (*Senecia jacobaea*)
  51. Toothed spurge (*Euphorbia dentata*)
  52. Wild oats (*Avena fatua*)
  53. Wild proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*)
  54. Yellow hawkweed (*Hieracium pretense*)
  55. Yellowflag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)
  56. Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)
  57. Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)
- Additional weeds designated as noxious under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law:
58. Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare* L.)
  59. Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*)
- Additional plant species designated undesirable by the Wisconsin DOT/DNR
60. Birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
  61. Common reed (*Phragmites australis*)
  62. Common teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*  
*subsp sylvestris*)
  63. Crownvetch (*Coronilla varia*)
  64. Cutleaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*)
  65. Dames rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
  66. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
  67. Reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
  68. White sweetclover (*Melilotus alba*)
  69. Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)
  70. Yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus officinalis*)

## APPENDIX B

### Field Inspection Procedures

The WCIA inspector must follow the following minimum guidelines for field inspections.

1. There shall be a minimum of two entry points per field.
  2. There shall be a minimum of one entry point per each 10 acres.
  3. Each point of entry shall be at least 150 feet into the field, and each additional 150 feet traveled shall constitute an entry point. Travel shall be uninterrupted, proceeding through the field being inspected.
  4. The entire field border shall be walked or driven.
  5. Fields shall be inspected within the 10 day period prior to harvest. Fields not harvested within 10 days after being inspected must be reinspected prior to harvest.
  6. An inspector may not inspect fields of which said inspector has ownership or financial interest.
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## APPENDIX C

### Definitions

1. **Certification Markings:** official certification tags or NAWMA approved colored twine.
2. **Cubes:** hay harvested with equipment which forms the hay into small compact self-binding units. These are not considered pellets as defined in this document and therefore the field of origin must be certified.
3. **Forage:** hay, straw, mulch, cubes, feed grain and pellets.