



Pesticide and Noxious Weed Newsletter

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Pesticide Applicator Meeting Security Policy

Every so often it becomes important to remind pesticide applicators, and especially managers who hire people taking applicator certification exams, of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) policies for pesticide applicator license exam security and certification meeting behavior. The Nebraska Pesticide Act (the Act) stipulates NDA is the lead state agency to regulate pesticides and the people who apply them. It also identifies the University of Nebraska (UNL) as the primary entity charged with training those people. The Act places a legal obligation on UNL to provide pesticide applicator education and makes it illegal for anyone to “aid or abet” someone else to evade the licensing process. NDA is the enforcement agency for the Act, and we take this role seriously.

In order to assure the public that pesticide applicators are competent to apply toxic chemicals, NDA works very hard at ensuring that training and testing sessions are of a consistent quality. We also require that any application for a license be signed by the applicant, and either an NDA or UNL employee physically present during the training or testing event. We do this because the Act specifically states that it is a violation of the law if someone attempts to circumvent this system to obtain a license for which they did not satisfy the training or testing criteria.

Because of our legal duty to administer and enforce the Act, NDA has certain policies in place for our employees, which we also ask be taken into consideration by UNL employees that conduct training or testing sessions. NDA believes it is important that training sessions are conducted in a professional and consistent manner. NDA requires all communication devices such as cell phones and computers to be turned off during testing or training. This policy is meant to reduce or eliminate cheating on exams, but is also meant to reduce distractions during training, and ensure the

applicators in the training receive a level of education that meets state and federal competency standards. NDA employees are authorized to confiscate any device or materials they feel are being used for cheating or distraction during testing or training (the device or material is returned after the session ends).

Finally, it should be noted that NDA has penalized people who have cheated on exams by stealing the exam booklets, sharing answers, or taking photographs of the exams. The loss of exams or exam answers is serious, since it results in rewriting exam booklets; a process that takes months in order to assure the questions are valid. For this reason, NDA considers cheating on exams to be a serious violation, and will take the most aggressive enforcement response allowed by the Pesticide Act.

The following points are a part of the NDA Examination Policy:

- All exams are CLOSED BOOK. Study materials are NOT allowed on tabletops during examinations.
- Cell phones, tablets and computers are to be turned OFF and will not

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be allowed on tabletops or in-hand. Calculator functions on these devices are NOT allowed.

- Battery operated calculators (without other functions) ARE allowed to be present and used during an exam.
- Testers are to make no marks in the exam booklet.
- Scratch paper on the answer sheet is the only paper allowed for long-hand math or drawings during an exam.
- Exam booklets MUST NEVER leave a testing room in a tester's possession.

More information on the Pesticide Program, its policies, and regulations is found at bit.ly/NDAPP.

Meet Trevor Johnson: New Certification and Worker Safety Specialist

The Pesticide/Fertilizer Program welcomes Trevor Johnson as our new certification and worker safety specialist. After Kay Kromm left the agency in November, Trevor transferred into his new position from the Nursery Inspection Program, where he worked since last spring. Trevor has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Nebraska in plant biology with a minor in grassland ecology and management. He has previously worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Nebraska. Trevor is interested in outdoor

sports, and is learning how to manage honeybees.



Welcome, Trevor!

Nebraska State Management Plan for Pesticides in Water

NDA has been working the last several years to update the concept of having a formal policy for managing pesticides to protect water resources. Many years ago, EPA required states to develop a state management plan for ground water, and since that time, the Nebraska Pesticide Act was updated to allow NDA the authority to regulate pesticides for protecting all water resources. The result is a draft, proposed policy, called the *Nebraska State Management Plan (SMP) for Pesticides and Water Resources* (bit.ly/NDAPPsmp).

In a nutshell, this policy establishes a procedure whereby the core state agencies dealing with water quality (the Departments of Health and Human Services, Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and the Natural

Resources Districts) would make up what is called the state management plan (SMP) committee, which would determine if water quality standards were being exceeded by any pesticide active ingredient. If so, the SMP committee would request that NDA convene a pesticide-specific management plan (PMP) advisory committee made up of 10-12 representatives of farm advocacy, pesticide industry, environmental advocacy, and University Extension interests, as well as the water agencies mentioned above. This committee would then devise a strategy, a PMP, for addressing the water quality problems, including voluntary practices and potentially regulatory actions. Any recommendations for additional regulations would need to be approved by the Director of Agriculture, and rulemaking hearings would be publicly held, according to the Nebraska Pesticide Act and the Nebraska Administrative Procedure Act.

NDA held two meetings to obtain public comment; one in August, the other in January. The next step is to formally adopt this policy through regulation, according to the Nebraska Pesticide Act. NDA invites all pesticide applicators and pesticide/farm organizations to review the draft proposal at the link to the left, and stay tuned for information on the public rulemaking hearing to adopt this policy.

Pesticide Container Recycling

2015 marks the 24th year of the Nebraska Extension Pesticide Container Recycling Program. The Pesticide Container Recycling Program recycles 1- and 2.5-gallon plastic pesticide containers and 15-, 30- and 55-gallon plastic crop protection chemical drums.

“In 2014, the program recycled close to 35 tons of plastic containers. In 23 years we’ve recycled about 2.3 million pounds of plastic pesticide containers in Nebraska, more than 1,100 tons,” said University of Nebraska–Lincoln pesticide safety educator Clyde Ogg.

“These are farm and ranch pesticide containers that could otherwise end up stored in barns or sheds or be improperly disposed of by casting them aside on creek banks or burning them,” Ogg said.

“The program’s goal has always been to provide a cost-effective, cooperative, and environmentally responsible way

to properly dispose of and reuse these containers.”

Plastic from collected containers is turned into industrial and consumer products like shipping pallets, drain tile, dimension lumber and parking lot tire bumpers.

The program accepts pressure-rinsed or triple-rinsed 1- and 2.5-gallon plastic pesticide containers. They must be clean and drained, inside and out. Caps, labels, booklets and slipcover plastic labels must be removed since they cannot be recycled as part of the program. Those items should be disposed of as normal, solid waste. Glued-on paper labels can be left on the container. Rinsate should be returned to the spray tank.

Drums must be thoroughly rinsed before delivery to collection sites and should not be cut or opened in any way. Mini-bulk, saddle tanks and nurse tanks, which can be made of fiberglass or plastics not compatible with the recycling

program, are not accepted.

A full list of recycling sites, guidelines and program information and details is on UNL’s Pesticide Safety Education Program website at pested.unl.edu/recycling.

Program funding is by a national coalition of agrichemical manufacturers through the Agricultural Container Recycling Council (acrecycle.org).

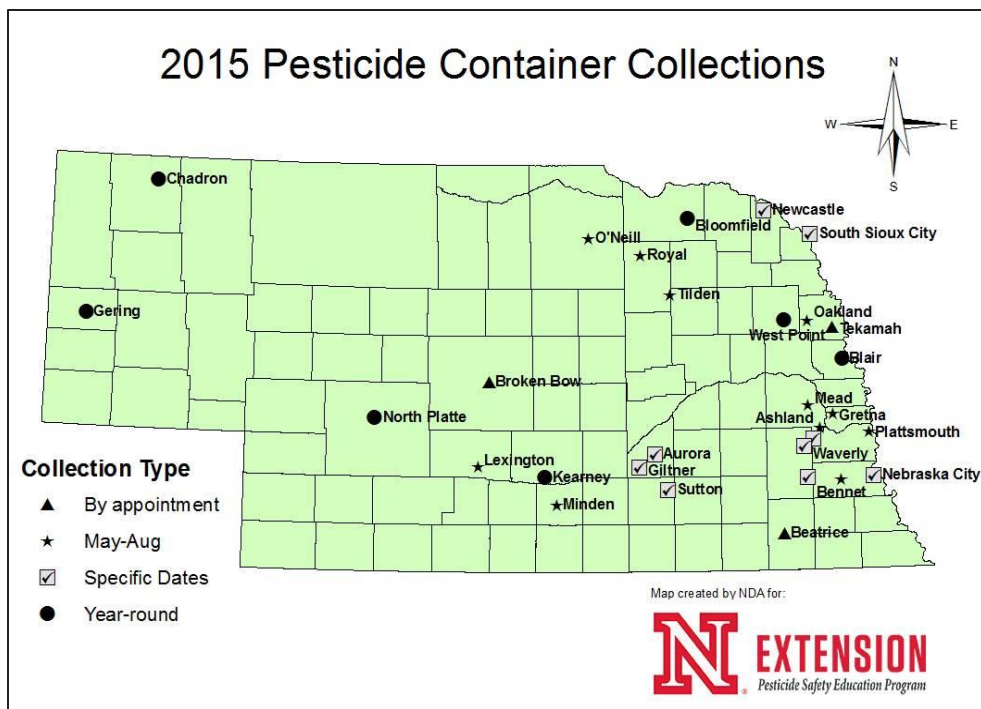
Limited Market for Enlist Corn

Dow AgroSciences registered Enlist Duo herbicide in 15 Corn Belt states, including Nebraska, for 2015.

Despite EPA approval to register this pesticide product to be used in combination with Enlist corn, the grain produced from this year’s crop may have a limited international market.

Until there is acceptance of the Enlist traits in other countries to which we export, growers should make certain there is the required 660 foot isolation buffer between Enlist hybrids they plant and nearby corn fields (see bit.ly/CLAdowart for more information).

For the 2015 season, Dow AgroSciences is insisting that growers who plant Enlist corn use it only for animal feed on their own farms. Until this trait is recognized by importing countries, elevators will likely not accept Enlist corn. Producers need to plan accordingly. Dow, of course, is hopeful this story will change before long.



Applicator Certification Reminders

- Notify NDA of any address change throughout the year. It is important to have up-to-date address information in order to send you recertification reminders and other information related to your pesticide applicator license.
- Look for UNL's Renewal Booklet in your mailbox in December. It will contain all the information you need to know about the upcoming recertification season.
- If you do not recertify at a meeting, you will have to retake the exams. So pay attention to recertification meeting dates!
- Our website is a great resource for information about your pesticide applicator license. Please, consult the NDA website first for questions about meeting dates and certification requirements (bit.ly/NDAPP).
- The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is responsible for all training materials. Please, contact them for information about training costs and where to purchase materials: pested.unl.edu or (402) 472-1632.

Drift and DriftWatch

The Director of NDA, Greg Ibach, issued a press release in April asking all pesticide applicators to be mindful of commercial specialty crops in the landscape and use best management practices and communication, including DriftWatch, to reduce drift and crop damage. The full press release can be viewed here: bit.ly/NDA15driftPR

A reminder to all outdoor pesticide applicators: The use of DriftWatch – both the access to the online map and the 'new specialty crop added' notification service – is **FREE!** This is a cheap, quick, and easy way to know where specialty crop sites are found, and adjust your spray activity accordingly. Most specialty crop growers also provide their contact information on DriftWatch, so you can give them a heads up about your spray plans and open the lines of communication. Take a minute to look at the DriftWatch map. Just go to fieldwatch.com where user guides can be found. And from there you are just a click or two away from the DriftWatch map.

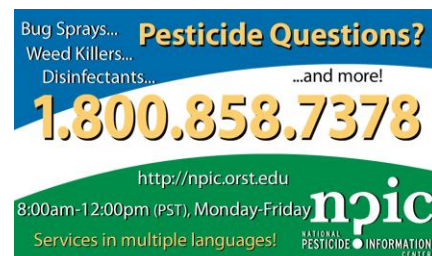
New Look/Feel for NDA's Website

This past winter, NDA had a major redesign of its website, including all focus areas and programs. The site is more user-friendly, and formatted for mobile users. Take a look at nda.nebraska.gov. Across the top header, you'll find the

department's major focus areas, and below the topic slideshow you'll find news and featured programs. Once you go to a focus area or specific program, the focus area header will remain at the top and the navigation menu will appear on the right side to allow you to more easily move from one program to another. There is also a 'pathway' at the top which will let you know where you're at in the hierarchy of pages, and help you get back to a specific spot within our site. The search function in the upper right corner has been greatly enhanced and is present on all pages, so if you can't find what you're looking for, this should be very helpful.



The direct URL for the Pesticide Program page is nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide. You should be able to get to most of your favorite sub-pages from this page, however you may want to update bookmarks and any links you may have to specific NDA web pages.



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NATIONAL PESTICIDE INFORMATION CENTER

Safe Plant ID (Or, “When A Picture Is Worth More Than a Thousand Words”)

By Ann Cotton, former Upper Niobrara White NRD/NRCS Field Office employee and PRIDE Board Member. This article can be seen in its entirety in the Spring 2014 issue at bit.ly/PRIDEweedwatch.

“What is this plant?” The customer tossed the semi-dried plant on the counter, spewing seeds as it landed.

“Good question.” I said. “It looks like a weed. Where did you find it? Let’s put it in an envelope before it loses any more seeds.”

The customer reported that the plants covered the bottom of a dried lakebed, which he planned to lease for cattle grazing. The land was in Colorado, over 200 miles from our office. He had pulled the plant and tossed it in the seat of his truck. I imagined the seeds sticking to his clothes, bouncing around the truck, and escaping out the door each time he stopped for gas, food, or errands.

Our office frequently receives plant identification requests, mostly for grasses, occasionally for trees or shrubs. Often, the customer walks in and thrusts part, or all, of a plant at me. Unless I can positively identify the plant, I refer to our range specialist. If it is a phone inquiry, I ask the caller to pull the plant if possible, so as to include the root structure, and then take several close-up photos of the plant. For shrubs and trees, we prefer to see enough of a branch, with leaves and attached flowers or seed bracts, to compare it against a classification key.

Plant identification and descriptions involve the following:

- >Habitat, or the area and type of ecosystem in which the plant is commonly found;
- >Flower and seed shapes, size, color;
- >Leaf shape, size, color, edge (smooth or serrated), and attachment location on the twig;
- >Branching and growth pattern of the overall plant;
- >Root structure.

The safest way to identify a plant is to take several good photos that illustrate all of those plant attributes, and share them with a plant specialist. Collecting plant specimens is illegal in state and national parks and national monuments, so photos are your best method.

Instead of photos, the next best method is to collect the plant specimen (with permission, if it is not on your land) and take notes on the area in which it was collected. Put the specimen in a zipper locking storage bag, trash bag, or large envelope and close it securely to prevent it from losing seeds or other parts.

Our office was unable to identify the plant, so we referred the customer to the local Extension Educator. He identified the plant as the immature stage of poison suckleya, *Suckleya suckleyana*, which is very toxic to livestock, pets, and humans, and can result in death if enough is ingested. He had dealt with this plant before, during drought in southern Colorado. At that time, the local veterinarian and other ranchers asked him to conduct a field inspection to identify the cause of death in over 30 head of horses, mules, and cattle. The dead animals were near a water tank, but the water had tested clean of adverse

chemicals, minerals, and biological agents.

Poison suckleya is a native forb throughout the Great Plains, from southern Saskatchewan and Alberta to Mexico. It is often found near water sources. Although the plant is not normally consumed by livestock, they may eat it during drought or when preferred forage is scarce. The plant contains cyanogenic glycosides, which cause cyanide poisoning when ingested. Cattle and sheep on the range are usually poisoned around noon, as they graze away from the watering hole. The animals are found dead by evening, or early the next morning.

Just think - if the customer had taken a few good photos of the plant and left the weed where he found it, he could have prevented the potential spread of a deadly weed along his route from Colorado. I cleaned the counter and vacuumed the office floor to capture the seeds, but who knows how many more escaped his vehicle? What price will other producers pay when the weed becomes established on their pastures?



**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES
IN YOUR TRACKS.**

PlayCleanGo.org

Play, Clean, Go provides a clear call to action to be informed, attentive and accountable for stopping the spread of terrestrial invasive species. Learn more at playcleango.org.

Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Protection
P.O. Box 94756
Lincoln, NE 68509-4756

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**Department of Agriculture
Noxious Weed Program
(402) 471-2351**

Mitch Coffin - Manager

Tammy Westbrook - Pesticide and Noxious
Weed Program Staff Assistant

David Boschult - (northeast)
(402) 416-4595

Paul Moyer - (southeast)
(402) 416-5587

Jeff Lampmann - (west)
(402) 416-5642

**Department of Agriculture
Pesticide/Fertilizer Program
(402) 471-2351**

Tim Creger - Manager

Donene Lewis - Pesticide/Fertilizer
Staff Assistant

Trevor Johnson - Certification/WPS Training

Buzz Vance - Pesticide and Fertilizer
Registration Specialist

Craig Romary – Environmental Programs

Herbert Bates - Case Review Officer

Inspectors:
Kevin Holdorf - (Omaha metro region)
(402) 234-2225

Rich Franchini - (north central region)
(402) 529-6808

Clayton Haman - (southeast region)
(402) 471-2351

Jeff Elsen - (Panhandle region)
(308) 254-7640

Eric Fuentes-Ruiz - (southwest region)
(308) 995-2158

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Web site: bit.ly/NDAPPnews2

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TDD users can contact the Department by first calling the Nebraska Relay System. Telephone (800) 833-7352 and asking the operator to call (402) 471-2351.

Greg Ibach, Director
Craig Romary, Editor