

Noxious Weed Control Authority

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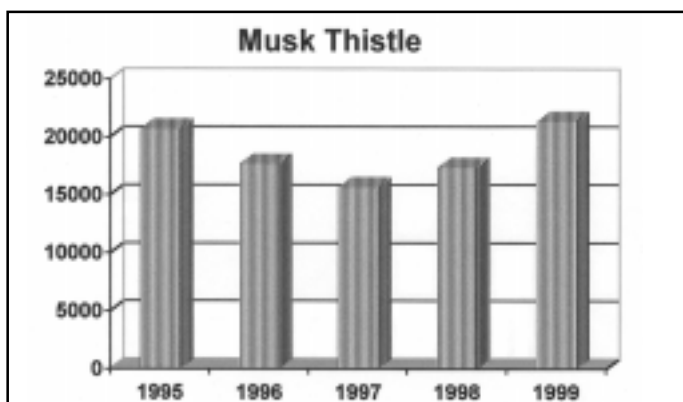
Weed Awareness



Year in review

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for administering the State Noxious Weed Control Act county-wide. The authority also administers the Weed Abatement Program in the City of Lincoln as a result of an interlocal agreement between the city and county.

Both the noxious weed and weed abatement seasons started early due to the mild spring temperatures and good soil moisture conditions that was ideal for germinating weed seeds. There was a 19 percent increase in weed abatement violations over 1998 requiring 800 additional inspections. The 5,333 acres of musk thistle infestations found were more than double than that found in 1998. There was an estimated 23 percent increase in the total acres of musk thistle in the county.



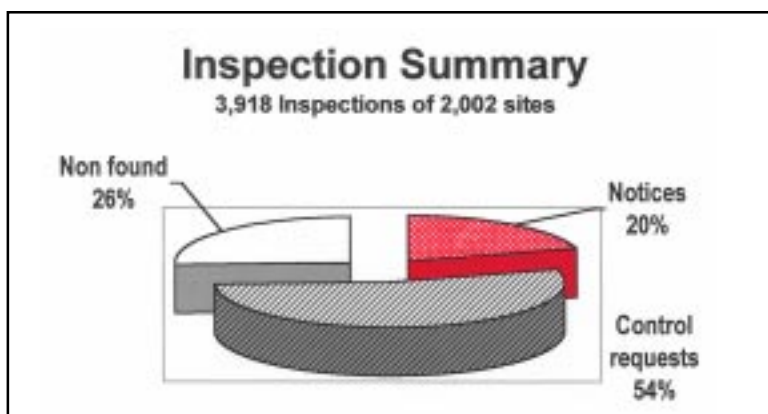
The fall was very dry which reduced the opportunity for fall noxious weed control. The dry weather decreased the amount of germination and reduced the effectiveness of herbicides. There were 339 problem sites inspected in the fall. Of these sites, 136 had only a trace infestation and no infestations were found at 100 sites. Of the 240 infested sites, 177 were deferred until spring for better conditions for control.

Inspection activity

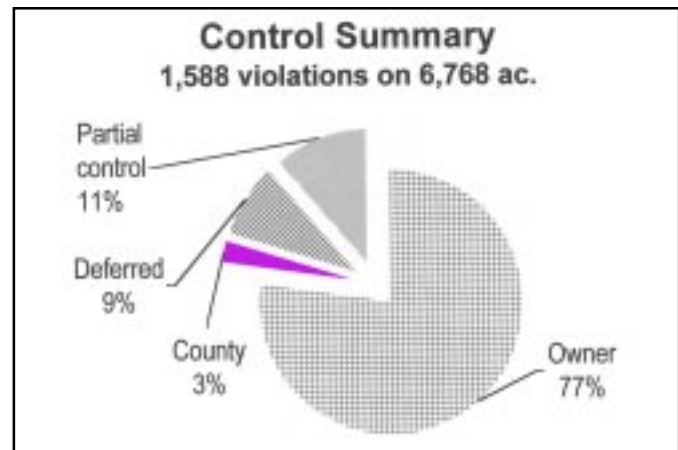
A total of 9,442 inspections have been made on 4,387 sites on 34,743 acres this year. Inspection activity for the year:

Noxious Weeds

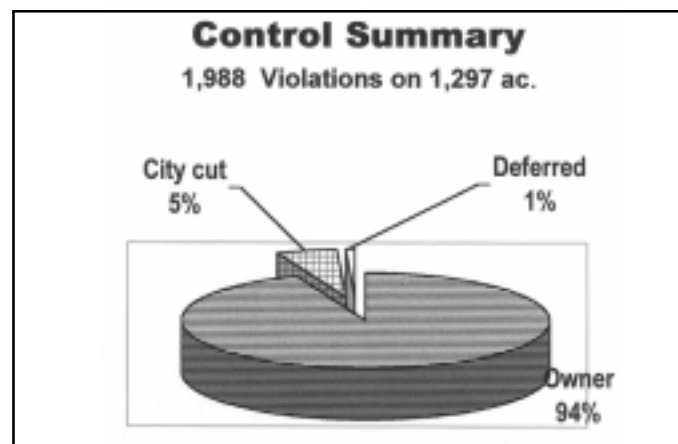
The inspectors made 3,918 inspections of 2,002 sites. They found 1,588 violations on 6,768 acres on the 27,266 acres inspected.



Landowners responded very well even with the difficult control conditions. Legal notices were required on only 27 percent of the 1,214 control requests. Owners controlled almost 85 percent of the infested acres not deferred.



Three percent of the acres were controlled by inspectors or force controlled.



Weed Abatement

Almost 2000 violations were found as a result of inspecting 2,385 sites. After being notified of a violation, 94 percent of the owners cut and removed overgrown vegetation. Of this, 110 were force cut by contractors.

Biological Control

The musk thistle head weevil population has increased enough over the past 30 years that they are reducing the amount of viable seed production. They have been found in 70-80 percent of flowering musk thistle heads the past two years.



A.czwalinae adult on leafy spurge

Three biological control sites have been established in the county. Two for leafy spurge and one for purple loosestrife. The hope is that these areas can be harvested to make additional releases resulting in beneficial populations in the future.

Control recommendations for musk and plumeless thistle



Early spring is a good time to control musk and plumeless thistles when they are in early, actively growing rosette stages. Scout and control the infested area on a weekly basis until you have all the plants killed. Assume there are "escapees" – plants you didn't see the last time. Musk and plumeless thistles are easily controlled in

small areas or lightly scattered areas by hand digging or pulling the entire plant. Sever the root at least one inch below the soil surface. If the soil is loose or wet, the entire plant is easily pulled. Use necessary protective clothing. **BEFORE USING ANY HERBICIDE, ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.**

Roundup is not the preferred herbicide to use.

When using hand sprayers, for 1 qt/acre recommended rate add 1.5 tablespoons (0.75 oz) herbicide per gallon of water. One gallon will cover about 1000 sq. ft. Example: recommended rate of 2 qts/acre converts to 3 T/gal of water (1.5 x 2 qt = 3 T).

Cropland

For crop land, use a broad-

leaf herbicide labeled for the crop. For fallow land, 2,4-D LVE at 2# active ingredient/acre may be used. Hand digging or tillage, severing roots two inches below the surface will also provide control.

Pasture, CRP and non-agricultural land

In seedling and rosette stage, Grazon P+D at 3 pt/acre may be used on pasture and CRP land. Other options are Clarity 8 oz + 2,4-D LVE 1# active ingredient/acre; or hand digging or tillage severing roots two inches below the surface. Once the thistles have bolted or are blooming, Escort .3 oz/acre + surfactant + 2,4-D LVE 1# active ingredient/acre; or Clarity 2 pts + 2,4-D LVE 1# active ingredient/acre or hand digging

or tillage severing roots two inches below the surface. Escort does reduce the formation of viable seed. Once the thistles have bolted (formed flower stalks) or flowering occurs, they are much more difficult to control. Once flowers mature and seeds have formed, minimize the spread of seeds by removing heads and burning them or mowing with a sickle-bar mower and then gathering and burning mowed debris. Always comply with any burning restrictions.

Alfalfa

For alfalfa there are no herbicides labeled for broadcast spraying of musk and plumeless thistles. Spot spraying thistle plants with 2,4-D is an option. Remember these herbicides may kill any alfalfa plants contacted.

Another option is hand digging or pulling individual plants. If alfalfa is cut prior to thistle flowering, any regrowth may be easily spotted and treated. **IF THISTLES ARE ALLOWED TO FLOWER, A QUARANTINE WILL BE ISSUED.** If the thistle infestation is scattered throughout or moderate to severe, consider breaking up the alfalfa and planting the field to a different crop. The alfalfa could be cut for hay prior to thistle flowering. Any regrowth could be killed with 2,4-D + Banvel or Roundup may be broadcast applied. Then a row crop no-tilled into the dead alfalfa residue. Check with the US Natural Resources Conservation Service office before proceeding if the field is part of a conservation compliance plan.