NEBRASKA
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DISASTER RELIEF INFORMATION SHEET

BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL INVASIVE SPECIES IN DONATED HAY

Under normal circumstances, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture believes that the best practice to prevent the introduction of noxious and invasive weeds through hay is to purchase and feed certified weed-free hay. However, in times of emergency, NDA would like to remind you that if you **purchase, receive, or feed hay of unknown origin**, it is important to **follow a few best management practices**:

- When possible, try to **determine the origin** of the hay and **investigate which invasive species are found in that area**. That may indicate which potential invaders to lookout for.
- In-state hay is less likely to introduce new, invasive species to an area, but **not always available in emergencies**.
- **Monitor hay donation sites and storage locations** in subsequent years to look for plants that may be out of place.
- **Feed in limited areas.** This makes it easier to monitor the locations in subsequent years for potential invasive plant introductions.
- If monitoring turns up unfamiliar plant species, **reach out to UNL Extension** (epd.unl.edu) or **your local county weed superintendent** (neweed.org) for accurate identification and control information.

Monitoring for invasive insect pests is much the same as for invasive weed parts. Knowing where the hay is from can narrow down the list of possible insect invaders. Different parts of the country have very different invasive insect pests, but luckily, hay is not often the host of choice.

One pest of interest is **Imported Fire Ant (IFA)**, which is currently not established in Nebraska, but is in southern states. There is a **federal quarantine in place for much of Texas and parts of Oklahoma** that requires hay that is leaving the quarantined area to be inspected and granted a Limited Permit before leaving a federally quarantined area. The current map of the IFA quarantine area can be found at: (https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/ifa/ifa-quarantine-map). If you suspect hay is infested with IFA, **call the NE Department of Agriculture at 402.471.2351**.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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