

Farmers and ranchers are killing native grasses

By Karen Krien

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Spraying county ditches with a chemical that kills all vegetation is becoming a problem in the county.

Justin Lohr, noxious weed supervisor, presented a letter to the commissioners which will be sent to farmers and ranchers.

If we don't get this matter under control, Mr. Lohr said, it will get worse.

The county crew prefers to have a good native grass stand such as brome grass which helps choke out noxious weeds and other undesirable plants including cheat and joint grass.

In the spring, farmers and commercial operators are spraying Glyphosate which is Round-up and, in the fall, they are spraying Atrazine.

It is killing all our native grasses that takes years to establish, Mr. Lohr said.

Also, he said, after this spray operation, it seems that there is more Kochia and other unwanted broad leafs growing later in the summer.

When the ditches are sterilized, not only does it kill the native grasses, but it causes the road shoulders to erode. Amazingly, he said, the sandburs continue to grow and thrive.

Mr. Lohr has been studying the ditches - those which have been sprayed and those which have not.

There is a great difference, he said, comparing the joint and cheat

grass growing on the same road that was sprayed a year ago to the native stand that wasn't sprayed.

He noted that the county inherited joint grass and he is trying to control it. This spring, he experimented with a chemical called Plateau that suppressed the native grassed but kills joint and cheat grass. He has also used a lighter rate of Glyphosate in the fall and that worked fairly well on the cheat and joint grasses.

The county has improved mowing operations in the last two decades and have learned that they should not mow brome grass until July when it has gone to seed.

There are several farmers, Mr. Lohr said, who do an excellent job of mowing the county ditches and the commissioners appreciate their effort.

"Have you ever noticed how nice the grass is on the state highway right of ways?" Mr. Lohr asked. "They are nice because the state does not allow spraying or farming."

Spraying small acreage

The commissioners talked about the control of noxious weeds. In years past, the noxious weed supervisor sprayed small areas, mostly in pasture, to help the ranchers as well as help keep noxious weeds under control. At a previous meeting, the commissioners agreed that the county's noxious weed supervisor would no longer spray these areas but devote his time to the ditches.

However, the commissioners decided that his service was still needed in small areas. Mr. Lohr said that part of the time, a rancher would say he had only 5 acres that needed spraying but, when he got there, it was 15 or more acres and he had to travel a distance into the pasture to even reach the area where there were noxious weeds.

He and the commissioners talked about raising the price for having Mr. Lohr spray. They asked him to get prices of what surrounding counties are charging.

Renting spray equipment

Mr. Lohr asked what the commissioners would think about purchasing some spraying equipment that could be rented to ranchers so they could do their own spraying. The commissioners agreed that maybe a system that could be put onto the back of a pickup could be purchased but they were not interested in purchasing a system that would be pulled behind the pickup.

Again, Mr. Lohr was asked to talk to other noxious weed sprayers and see if they have this type of equipment and how much it would cost.

Arial spraying

Mr. Lohr talked about having Grace Flying do some more arial spraying this fall. There was still a farmer who hadn't paid his bill from last year. The commissioners discussed the problem, wondering if the county should pay Grace Flying and then charge the farmer. If they don't pay, there is more leverage with a county attorney.

Web site information

To help get information to the public, Mr. Lohr will be having photos of noxious weeds and how to take care of them put on the county's web site.



DESTANY CLEMANS shows her dog at the Cheyenne County Fair.

Times staff photo by Tim Burr

Student News

Nathan Hendricks received his doctoral degree in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California at Davis. His dissertation research estimated how corn and soybean acreage response to price varies across space and over time using crop data derived from satellite imagery.

Nathan, his wife, Lindsay,

and daughter, Charli Mae, have moved to Manhattan where he will conduct research and teach in the department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University.

Nathan is a graduate of Cheylin High School and received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Kansas State. He is the son of John and Sharon Hendricks.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Cheyenne County will hold a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on **Saturday, Aug. 27 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** at the Cheyenne County Landfill.

Materials accepted include paints, solvents, cleaners, pesticides, aerosol cans, batteries and used oil. Automobile lead acid batteries will be accepted. Please have the materials in sturdy boxes for easy and quick unloading. Have your used oil in disposable containers. Farm chemicals, appliances, tires, yard waste, explosives, school lab chemicals, medical waste, radioactive waste, ammo, compressed gas cylinders (propane), asbestos, dioxins or silvex will not be accepted. Program organizers reserve the right to reject delivery of materials.

Participants are asked to leave all materials in their original containers. If the container is leaking, pack the container "as is" in another larger container and label it clearly. If another container is used, be sure it is clearly labeled. Do not mix contents of different containers. Securely package materials before transporting. Do not carry open containers of liquids with strong odors or spill potential in a closed automobile. Pack the containers so they won't tip, break or spill during travel. Waste oil should not contain gasoline, solvents, decreases, paint or antifreeze. Keep all household hazardous waste away from children and animals.

Due to KDHE regulations these are items that can't be picked up during the City-Wide Cleanup later in the month. You do not need to call prior to bringing items to the Landfill. If you have questions, please call the Landfill at 785-332-8842, Tuesday through Saturday.

No Household Hazardous Waste items accepted early or after the clean up date.

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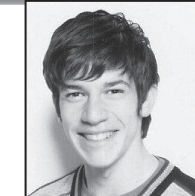
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Patrick from France, 17 yrs.
Loves the outdoors and playing soccer. Patrick's dream has been to spend time in America learning about our customs and attending American high school.



Elisa from Italy, 16 yrs.
Likes to play tennis, swim, loves to dance. Elisa hopes to play American softball and learn American 'slang' while in the USA.

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