POLICY

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Weed Inspection and Control	**May 8, 2023**	**RC23-168**

Introduction

The County, Agriculture Services Department works closely with landowners to combat Noxious and Prohibited Noxious weed problems in the area. The Agriculture Services Department provides technical support and encourages landowners to control the infestation and spread of these weeds. Weeds identified as Noxious or Prohibited Noxious will be controlled or destroyed as outlined in the Provincial Weed Control Act. Control methods including cultural, chemical, mechanical, and biological, and these form the Integrated Pest Management strategy.

Policy

The Agricultural Service Board is responsible for developing and delivering a weed control program within Birch Hills County. This policy will be used to guide that program, make the responsibilities of all parties clear and set out a timetable for the achievement of the objectives. All residents and agricultural producers, whether organic or conventional, are subject to this policy.

Definitions

"Control" means to inhibit the growth or spread, or to destroy.

"County" means Birch Hills County having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

"Destroy" means to kill all growing parts, or to render reproductive mechanisms non-viable.

"Inspector" means a person appointed by Council as an inspector under the authority of the Act.

"Integrated Pest Management" means a variety of pest management techniques that focus on pest prevention, pest reduction and the elimination of conditions that lead to pest infestations.

"Noxious Weed" means a plant designated in accordance with the Alberta Weed Control Act as a noxious weed and includes the plant seeds.

"Pedigree Seed" means a recorded purity of a strain of seed.

"Prohibited Noxious Weed" means a plant designated in accordance with the Alberta *Weed Control Act* as a prohibited noxious weed and includes the plant seeds.

"Roadside Rights of Way" means a general term referring to land between property lines, the part of the public road which includes shoulders and ditches.

Guidelines

Responsibilities:

1. Birch Hills County will:

   1.1. conduct annual weed control operations on Municipal lands including roadside rights of way.

      1.1.1. If a landowner requests a No Spray Agreement on the roadside right of way adjacent to their land, it becomes the landowner's responsibility to control or destroy the Prohibited noxious or Noxious weeds on the roadside rights of way covered under their Agreement

   1.2. conduct a weed inspection and enforcement program on private land, crown land, and municipal land, including transportation corridors, and industrial sites.

      1.2.1. have sufficient weed inspectors appointed by Council to conduct and enforce the County Weed Inspection Program.

   1.3. Work with the Provincial Government and other cooperators to provide weed identification and control extension. This will be in the form of public awareness sessions, newsletters, brochures, and ads in the local newspaper and on the County's social media pages and website.

2. Landowners will:

   2.1. destroy prohibited noxious weed and control noxious weed infestations, by active measures such as herbicide application, mechanical methods, or a combination of methods resulting in an Integrated Pest Management Plan. Information on these plans can be obtained by contacting the Director of Agriculture Services.

   2.2. prevent the spread of regulated weed seeds by using proper equipment sanitation and recommended farming practices.

3. Others:

3.1. Industries, truckers, seed cleaning plants, and others are expected to take precautionary measures to prevent the spread of regulated weed seeds in contaminated hay, equipment, gravel, seed grain, or other materials.

3.1.1. Loads must be properly tarped.

3.1.2. Contaminated materials are not to be transported unless authorization is obtained from the Agriculture Services Department.

3.1.3. Transportation of contaminated materials is otherwise forbidden under the *Weed Control Act.*

4. Weed Inspectors:

4.1. The County will employ an adequate number of weed inspectors to carry out the County's obligations under the *Weed Control Act.*

4.1.1. Each weed inspector will be appointed by Council.

4.1.2. Each weed inspector shall be properly trained in weed identification and as an authorized assistant pesticide applicator.

4.2. Inspectors will perform routine inspections and respond to rate-payer's concerns.

5. The County expects landowners to live up to their responsibility of weed control.

5.1. If the weed control expectations are not met, a weed notice may be issued.

5.2. If the weed notice is not complied with, the County will hire a contractor to complete the actions outlines in the notice, or complete the actions themselves. Charges for non-compliance may also be considered, as outlined in the Act.

5.2.1. The landowner or occupant shall be responsible for the cost of weed control. Failure to pay will result in the sum owing being applied to the tax roll or collected in Court, as per the Act.

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5.3. When regulated weeds are found later in the season and control and eradication methods are no longer a viable option, the landowner/occupant will be notified, and a follow-up by a weed inspector will occur no later than June 15th of the following year.

5.4. Landowners may appeal a weed notice in accordance to the Weed Control Regulation.

REEVE **C.A.O**

	Date	Resolution Number
Adopted by Council	May 8, 2023	RC23-168
Updated		