

Some FAQs about weed-free forage on Forest Service land

Effective January 1, 2007, commercially processed feed pellets and/or certified weed-free straw and feed is now required within all wilderness areas and adjacent trailheads in our PNW National Forests, managed by the USDA Forest Service. On January 1, 2009, this requirement will be in effect for all US Forest Service lands.

Why are weed-free forage and straw now mandatory on Forest Service wilderness areas?

Invasive plants, including noxious weeds, are a serious threat to natural areas. They outcompete native plants, degrade wildlife habitat, and reduce soil and water quality. They also cause economic losses in natural areas by reducing aesthetics and recreational opportunities.

While these weeds can be extremely difficult to remove once they've established anywhere - cropland, rangeland, yards, abandoned lots - they are especially hard to detect and then eradicate in wilderness areas.

The USDA Forest Service passed this order [36 CFR 261.58(t)] to help prevent the introduction of new weed seeds into designated wilderness areas.

What kinds of products are included in this weed-free requirement?

Hay, hay cubes, straw, grain, and other crop or mulch products must be certified weed-free using North American Weed management Association (NAWMA) standards, regardless of how they are used (livestock feed, erosion control, mulch, *etc.*).

Commercially processed feed pellets and steamed, rolled grains are considered weed-free feed and do not need additional certification. The processes by which they are made effectively destroys most viable seeds.

Are these weed-free products required if someone is passing through National Forests?

No. You can transport non-certified products through National Forest lands, as long as you do not unload or use them while on the designated wilderness areas and nearby trailheads.

Where can I get state certified hay and crop products in Washington?

Currently, the State of Washington Department of Agriculture does not have a statewide, weed-free certification program for hay or crop products.

Interested County Noxious Weed Control Boards may have employees trained to certify weed-free hay and crop products under North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) standards in March, 2008 for the upcoming growing season.

Please check back regularly. We will provide more information as Washington producers become certified.

How can a grower get his or her crops NAWMA certified in Washington?

If you are a producer of hay, straw, or other mulching crop product and are interested in getting certification, please contact the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board at 360-902-2082 or at noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov.

You can download the official USDA Forest Service question and answer PDF [here](#). It contains more detailed information. You can also go visit the PNW Forest Service webpage on invasive plants at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/weeds/>