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Preparing Now for Sericea Lespedeza Control

As far as noxious weeds go, Sericea lespedeza provides one of the more daunting control challenges. Noxious is an apt description, since the large seed bank and vigorous growth habit of Sericea means it's a challenge to control on the front end, and then must be repeated every two to four years just to keep it at bay! It's a huge concern for grass growers, and one that deserves some attention from a control standpoint.

Non chemical control options are available. Biological control options are non-existent. You can try grazing goats or sheep with some success. Use four to five goats per acre of sericea, grazing heavily enough to eliminate seed production. Frequent mowing will damage sericea, as well as desirable plants, so use with caution. If used, do so in mid- to late-July, understanding that seed production will likely not be eliminated. Mowing might be an option in collaboration with chemical control methods, so long as you wait about four weeks after mowing before applying herbicides.

Herbicides can do a really good job if applied correctly. Apply products like Remedy Ultra (triclopyr) and PastureGard HL in June and into early July when the sericea plants are vegetative. Products containing metsulfuron, such as Escort XP, Cimarron Plus, and Chaparral are generally more effective in the late summer when sericea lespedeza is actively blooming. Be sure and follow label recommendations and directions for all products. If spot treating, mix 0.5 fl oz. PastureGard HL per gallon of water, use a 1 percent solution of Remedy Ultra in water, or 0.3 grams Escort XP per gallon of water. Repeat treatments will needed every two to four years.

Too Much Rain!

With the intense rains some areas have seen of late, many soils are at a saturation point. Typically, that leads us to assume that watering won't be needed for a while. Maybe, but not always!

Saturated soils lack oxygen, allowing roots to be drowned. As temperatures ramp up and drier weather prevails, plants with damaged root systems might actually be more susceptible to a lack of water than those not in saturated soils. Be sure and watch plants for signs of wilting or leaf scorching and water as needed. When irrigation is called for, do so deeply and infrequently - once per week is sufficient depending on the weather to keep soils moist but not waterlogged.