

Purchasing and Using Certified Hay
Submitted by: Krishona Martinson

There is a growing demand for the use of certified noxious weed seed free forage as a prevention to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Noxious weeds compete against native plants, degrade ecosystems, and ultimately pose a threat to wildlife. A common characteristic of all noxious weeds are their aggressive, competitive behavior. Typically, they steal moisture, nutrients, and sunlight from surrounding plants, and can rob waterfowl and mammals of their food sources, nesting areas, and access to water.

The certified noxious weed seed free forage program is designated to assure that certified forage meets the minimum standards designed to limit the spread of noxious weeds. The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) has been designated under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law as the official noxious weed seed free forage certification agency in Minnesota. Forage certified under MCIA is eligible to be shipped into restricted area in the United States and Canada were only certified forages can be used.

In Minnesota, there are no areas where certified hay must be used. When trail riding and camping in public parks, it is considered voluntary to use certified hay. However, if you are planning a trail ride or camping trip with your horse to Wyoming, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Utah or Colorado to ride on public lands (like the Black Hills National Forest and Custer State Park in SD) then certified hay must be used. These states are requiring that people use certified weed-free hay on all state wildlife areas. The penalty for using non-certified hay on state properties can range from \$68 to \$1,370, depending on the seriousness of the violation. The offender could also be responsible for the recovery costs for damage caused by noxious weeds to wildlife habitat.

In Minnesota, the following producers have applied for certification of noxious weed seed free forage as of September 1st, 2003. For a current list of producers, buyers can call MCIA (800-510-6242) until the 2004 directory is published or made available on-line in September.

<u>Home County</u>	<u>Forage Contents</u>	<u>Producer and Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Marshal	Alfalfa	Dwight Wahlen 3215 18 th Street NE, Manvel, ND 58256	701-696-2388
Olmsted	Alfalfa	Russell L. Wright 5510 County Road 103 NW, Byron, MN 55902	507-775-2512
Pine	Hay	Gary and Rosi Holmes 47280 Fleming Loggine Road, Hinkley, MN 55037	320-384-7873
Scott	Hay	John Schulte 6991 Bridle Path, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952-891-2781
Stearns	Alfalfa	Dale Spanier 25827 303 rd Avenue, Paynesville, MN 56362	320-567-2164
Swift	Alfalfa	James R. Gallagher 107 9 th Street South, Daverns, MN 56231	320-567-2164

Forage producers desiring to have their forage certified must apply to MCIA on an application form four weeks prior to each cutting. In addition to a thorough inspection of each field, adjacent areas and storage sites will be inspected. Reinspections can be made at the request of the applicant. Please visit the MCIA website for more information at www.mncia.org.