



United States Department of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

Farm Service Agency

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Iowa Conservation Memo 17-20
Iowa Compliance Memo 17-13

TO: All USDA Service Centers

FROM: 
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Acting State Executive Director


Kurt Simon, NRCS
State Conservationist

DATE: April 24, 2017

SUBJECT: FSA/NRCS Joint Guidance for Palmer Amaranth

Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*) is an adaptable and invasive weed that was first detected in Iowa in 2013 in soybean fields. During the 2016 growing season, Palmer amaranth was found on some land that is enrolled in USDA programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and was seeded to native prairie, such as pollinator and other wildlife plantings. Palmer amaranth is considered a serious pest that poses a potential threat to annual crops in Iowa.

Action Items

CRP participants are required to establish the contracted cover type and ensure that “undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds)” are controlled. CRP participants are required to control weeds according to NRCS conservation practice standard Herbaceous Weed Control (315). Spot treatments are the preferred method of control. Spot treatments with herbicide are allowed in years 1 through 3 of the contract at any time; after year 3, FSA County Committee (COC) approval is required for any herbicide applications made during Primary Nesting Season.

Allowable spot treatment methods according to CRP policy and the Herbaceous Weed Control standard include:

- Hand Pulling
- Mowing
- Spot herbicide treatment
- Prescribed burning

Some infestations may require “**Broadcast Herbicide Application**” on larger portions of the contract. The FSA County Committee (COC) approval is required for broadcast herbicide applications at all times, since they may alter the composition of the vegetation in the planting. This method is only available on CRP contract acres **certified to have 100 or more Palmer amaranth** plants present.

If it’s determined that the CRP participant’s best course of action is to use broadcast herbicide applications on large portions of the contract, the infestation must be **certified by a third party** before the COC can approve the implementing of widespread herbicide applications.

At a minimum a third party statement must consist of a Signed and Dated statement certifying that the CRP Contracted Acres have 100 or more Palmer amaranth plants present. This third party statement can come from any one as long as they are not a family member of the CRP participant.

Example: “I _____, certify that 100 or more Palmer amaranth plants are present on _____ CRP contract.”

Along with the third party verification, the CRP participant will also need to submit a request in writing to the COC to apply the “broadcast herbicide applications” methods found in the “*Iowa NRCS Technical Note 40: Eradicating Palmer amaranth on Tallgrass Prairie Restorations.*” These request would be much like the requests made for spot treatments during the Primary Nesting Season.

Requirements of the request to use widespread herbicide applications:

- CRP participant name printed clearly
- CRP Contract Number(s)
- Shall include a map of the area that is to be treated
- Shall contain the methods that will be used
- Must be signed and dated by the CRP participant

