

Idaho State Department of Agriculture
IDAPA 02.06.22 Noxious Weed Rules
June 20, 2017

Present: Terry Lee, Idaho Association of Weed Control Superintendents; Dennis Fix, Far West Garden Center; Ann Bates, Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association; Seneca Hull, Franz Witte; Jonathan Oppenheimer, Idaho Conservation League; Will Wicherski, Idaho Conservation League; Angela Rossmann, Great Old Broads for Wilderness; Bob DiGrazia; W. Dallas Burkhalter, ISDA/Office of the Attorney General; Janis Perry, ISDA.

AGENDA ITEMS

WELCOME

The meeting convened at 1:35 pm.

Dennis Fix stated that the group had started initially at an impasse, but that at the end of the last meeting it seemed like there was movement to come together. He asked if there were any ideas.

Angela Rossmann explained that she had thousands of ideas. But that something did happen recently she needed to share. JH Inc., a builder who is not part of the builder's association, planted lots of yew around expensive homes near Windsong and Redstone (not far from here). The builder obviously had not been educated to where not to plant yew to protect wildlife.

Seneca Hull responded that she does not believe that banning yew is the answer.

Angela Rossmann expressed her feelings that after Blaine County passed their ordinance, people changed their ideas about banning yew. She could see rural and urban interfaces and hot spots monitored by weed superintendents, especially in Ada, Cassia, and Blaine Counties with other plants replacing yews.

Seneca Hull explained that few plants grow well where yews do. Also banning the yew would cause logistical problems for weed superintendents. She felt that education would be more impactful, along with signage. She also suggested public service announcements.

Angela Rossmann responded that no other plant is as toxic as yew, especially with it being most toxic in the winter.

Dennis Fix asked Angela to explain her idea for districts such as Ada, Cassia, and Blaine Counties.

Angela Rossmann stated that we could identify hot spots in the state. She mentioned an education component and expanding the knowledge base. She also suggested the poisonous plant option as long as it remained under Department of Ag. She said "ban is not the only answer."

Jonathan Oppenheimer wondered if we could have an interim step this year; establish a poisonous

category and mandatory marketing; then see what the winter brings. We could even go with the county level like Blaine County did.

Bob DiGrazia expressed that he felt that there is a lot of movement on this issue in Montana and in Washington. He shared that an elk had died in the foothills last week, but the cause was not determined yet. He stated that the hunting community knows the problem and wants the insanity of selling yew stopped.

Terry Lee explained that he also is a hunter but as a weed superintendent he does not favor adding yews to the noxious weed list. He stated that counties have the ability to restrict them through the county commissioners.

Seneca Hull said we have offered substitutes, but putting yews on the noxious weed list does not work.

Angela Rossmann asked then how do we slow down the planting

Dennis Fix responded that when Harris Ranch opened, we learned what deer liked to eat and what not to plant. He favors continuing with education in hot spots which will reduce the sale of yews.

Angela Rossmann asked what effect the publicity had had on the sale of yews this year

Dennis Fix stated that he thought it was self regulating and that this year there were definitely fewer sales.

Bob DiGrazia commented that as a retired businessman and dentist every nation had banned silver mercury fillings but it was still legal to use them in the US. In spite of the fact that he had a large store of that material he did not use that.

Angela Rossmann responded that some of the big box stores that she contacted have chosen not to bring yews into the state for sale.

Dennis Fix again asked how can we come together.

Jonathan Oppenheimer asked how many retailers are in the INLA.

Ann Bates replied that the big box stores are not.

In response to a question about Pacific yew, Jonathan Oppenheimer stated that in north Idaho moose rely on it and it is not poisonous.

Ann Bates indicated that ISDA has to license everyone who sells plants in the state. INLA does educational programs including an October conference and newsletters where information on yews has been given.

Terry Lee supports a toxic plant list but is against putting yews on the noxious weeds list. He feels that

there is high mortality in wildlife for many reasons.

Bob DiGrazia restated that hunters see no options except not to sell the plants.

Angela Rossmann commented that Cloverdale Nursery sold yews to Terra Nativa which were then planted in a wildlife interface. She suggested that perhaps an alliance could be built to provide education.

Dennis Fix responded that we need to talk to developers and to the city and to the ag department to pull together to suggest solutions that perhaps include wrapping yews next winter.

Jonathan Oppenheimer cautioned about being too Boise centric.

Angela Rossmann asked if we could get the weed superintendents to help.

Terry Lee answered yes.

Angela Rossmann stated we can all work together.

Terry Lee commented that we get called for everything.

Angela Rossmann responded “I like to connect people. I am a background person. It is not my style to be out front.”

Jonathan Oppenheimer wondered if Option B of the strawmen would work with this consensus approach.

Dallas Burkhalter indicated that Option B would add a new section 101 Designation of Poisonous Plants to the Noxious Weed Rule. This would not ban the sale of yew but would require a warning tag.

Dennis Fix questioned whether we should use ISDA as a clearinghouse rather than through rulemaking for this issue.

The group agreed to send their consensus ideas to the rulemaking website rulesinfo@ISDA.IDAHO.GOV (with Yew Working Group June 20 in the subject line) prior to July 10. These ideas will be disseminated to those who submit on July 11.

The small group agreed to meet again Friday, July 14, at 1:30 pm. at ISDA.

The meeting concluded at 3:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Janis Perry.