



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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ISDA FINDS BIRD, ANIMAL FEED CONTAINING NOXIOUS WEED SEED; AGENCY ISSUES STOP SALE ORDERS

(BOISE) The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has ordered two dozen companies to stop the sale of bird and other animal feeds that contain viable noxious weed seeds.

A routine sampling of animal feed products revealed that several manufacturers have been distributing the feed to stores throughout Idaho contaminated with noxious weed seed. Most of the products containing the noxious weed seed were domestic or wild bird feed mixes, but some were also feeds for hamsters, gerbils and squirrels.

The sale of feeds containing noxious weeds poses a major threat to the state's ability to control the spread of noxious weeds. The state already spends millions of dollars a year combating noxious weeds.

Over the last several months the department has sampled 92 feeds from 34 manufacturers. Idaho State Seed Lab tests concluded that 54 of the 92 seed-type feed samples contained viable noxious weed seeds, including Buffalobur, Jointed Goatgrass, Field Bindweed, Johnsongrass, Canada Thistle and Hoary Cress.

The seeds that tested positive came from 24 bird seed manufacturers.

"Noxious weeds are costly to our recreation and agriculture industries. It is important that everyone involved do their part to control and prevent the spread of noxious weeds," said Pat Takasugi, director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

All of the companies have been notified and several companies have already begun work on additional cleaning techniques that can be used to detect and eliminate noxious weed seeds from each animal feed batch. Retail establishments have also assisted the department in the detection and elimination of potentially undesirable products from the Idaho market. The department will be reviewing each company's case over the coming months to determine what level of regulatory action may be warranted. State law allows ISDA to issue a warning letter or assess a civil penalty.

There are 36 weeds on the state's noxious weeds list. The weeds are considered noxious because they destroy wildlife habitat, crowd out beneficial native plants, create fire hazards, poison humans and livestock and spoil recreation sites, including bike paths, lakes and rivers.

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