



Media Release

Liverpool Plains Shire Council – 6746 1755

Biosecurity Regulations state that both sellers and buyers of fodder have a duty of care to minimise the impact and risk of weeds

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Drought conditions impact heavily on primary production and an unfortunate side effect is an increased risk of new and existing weeds being introduced in fodder such as hay, grain or cottonseed imported from other parts of NSW and interstate.

Liverpool Plains Shire Council Authorized Biosecurity Weeds Officer, Michael Whitney, said that as feed supplies continue to become scarce and more expensive, farmers desperate to feed hungry stock are looking further afield to secure drought fodder.

"With the importation of feed from outside the region the risk of new weeds being spread throughout the Shire increases. The increased movement of hay particularly poorer quality stubble and pasture from south east Queensland dramatically increases the chance of weeds such as Parthenium entering NSW," he said.

Michael pointed out that the Biosecurity Act 2015 is quite specific regarding vendors and purchasers' obligations when selling, purchasing and transporting fodder within NSW and from interstate. He said under the Act's regulations the fodder industry is largely to be managed through the general biosecurity duty (GBD) where everyone has a duty to minimise the impact and risk of weeds.

"For example, a seller of fodder cannot knowingly spread weeds. The seller should also disclose if a weed may be present in the fodder and advise the buyer how to treat the product to ensure that any germinated weed seeds are unviable.

"The buyer on the other hand has an obligation to be vigilant and treat the weed should they germinate. Importantly the Regulation notes that the buyer should consider that the movement of fodder onto their property increases the risk of transferring weeds and pests and ensure that this is mitigated by purchasing from a reliable source. It is the buyer's choice whether to ask for a vendor declaration detailing the likelihood of weed contamination and what weeds to look for," he continued.

Michael highlights the importance of ensuring vehicles and equipment carrying fodder are cleaned before entering a property to reduce the spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. He said it is important to remember that land managers are within their rights to request this and they should not allow any vehicles on to their property that represent an unreasonable risk.

"Producers can also reduce the risk of new weed incursions by feeding in areas that can be easily identified and monitored for new weeds following the drought. He said it is also important to keep livestock brought in from other areas yarded until they empty out to reduce weeds spreading because plants such as Tropical Soda Apple may be transported in the guts of animals, spreading once those animals are released onto new country.

"It is recognised that in these trying times producers are being forced to be less selective as feed continues to become scarcer. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that new incursions of weeds such as Parthenium could have a serious effect on farm biosecurity and the wider environment long after the drought has broken," he said.

For further information on weeds and the new Biosecurity Act, contact NSW DPI on 1800 680 244, North West Local Lands Service on 1300 795 299 or me on 0427 961 980," he concluded.

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