

News Release



Contacts: Nancy Phelps, 503-808-2914
Glen Sachet, 503-808-2790

April 20, 2007

**USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region**

Weed-free Feed Required in Northwest Wilderness

PORTLAND, OR – As part of a larger effort to reduce invasive species on national forest lands, weed-free feed is being required of those using Wildernesses in the Pacific Northwest this year. A new requirement – part of a larger regional study on invasive species – says that all feed used on forests be weed-free by 2009.

For now, the new requirement applies to those Wildernesses in the Pacific Northwest which do not already require weed-free feed: Washington State Cascade Mountain Wildernesses along with Eagle Cap and Hells Canyon Wildernesses in Oregon have required weed-free feed for many years.

Livestock owners and others will be required to use feed that is either commercially processed feed or crop products certified to be free of weed seeds. Officials will concentrate on education and compliance this year, until signage and outreach efforts are fully implemented with stricter enforcement to follow.

The new requirement says that all hay, cubed hay, straw, mulch, and other such products used or stored on national forest lands be state certified as weed free. Crop products often contain seeds of non-native weeds that germinate on public lands and damage their health and beauty. Non-native weeds such as leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, purple loosestrife, and others are alien to the United States and have no natural enemies to check their spread. The new requirement is specific to Wilderness because these areas often are free of invasive plants and introduction can be checked through efforts such as weed-free feed.

The Oregon, Idaho and Nevada Departments of Agriculture have developed certification processes for crop products. Hay fields are inspected to ensure that listed noxious weed seeds are absent. Once a field passes this inspection, hay and other crop products from the field are labeled as “certified weed-free.” There is no comparable program in the state of Washington. Commercially processed feed (pellets and steamed, rolled grains) are not affected by the order and should be used in the affected national forest lands if certified hay products are not available.

For more information, visit www.fs.fed.us/r6/weeds

#