

Increasing Awareness of Control Methods: A Leafy Spurge Demonstration Site

Funded by the Brandon Soils Management Association

Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula* L.) is a threat to biodiversity in nature lands and agricultural lands in Manitoba. The noxious weed annually costs Manitobans in excess of \$20 million. Listed on the World Conservation Union's list of 100 worst invasive species, leafy spurge arrived in Manitoba via contaminated seed grain from Eastern Europe in the 1800s. Based on the 1999 Leafy Spurge Economic Impact Assessment over 340,000 acres were affected. Through the Prairie Region Invasive Plant Species research project, it is estimated the 2008 leafy spurge infestation in Manitoba is nearly 700,000 acres.



To effectively control and manage leafy spurge infestations, producers, land managers, municipalities, industries, and conservation groups require information appropriate for southern Manitoba. The goal of this project is to increase the adoption of beneficial management practices among producers, land managers, municipalities, and industry for the prevention and management of leafy spurge. Through the use of a demonstration site, the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group will create a dynamic learning environment. The aim of this site is to demonstrate within the growing season how landowners can weaken leafy spurge stands while increasing the biomass of desirable plant species. The site will demonstrate the effect of increased competitiveness of grass through fertilization and consequently the increased vulnerability of leafy spurge plants to other control methods.

This project will build on two previous successful demonstration sites (2006-2007) in the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis. The project will also create and distribute a project fact sheet, project webpages, a summer field tour, self-guided tour pamphlet, news article on the project, a final report, and a two page summary of the project's achievements.

The project will be coordinated by the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group whose experience includes documenting the impact of leafy spurge on several species at risk; working with landowners and rural municipalities in developing Integrated Pest Management Plans for the control of leafy spurge; and extensive awareness and stewardship activities designed to increase awareness of leafy spurge and its impact and to encourage changes in behaviour in landowners and agricultural producers that result in best management practices.

The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group is an association of more than 20 members from agricultural and conservation agencies plus all three levels of government. The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (www.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/lssg.html) was established in 1998 to increase awareness of leafy spurge, examine its issues and impacts, provide related communication and outreach, and enhance coordination among stakeholder agencies.

For more information on the project contact Ryan Gibson (gibsonr@brandonu.ca) or visit www.brandonu.ca/rdi.



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