

Position Statement
by the
Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council

Prioritize Invasive Species Management Practices in the 2007 Farm Bill

Invasive species cost U.S. citizens over \$137 billion annually in losses and control expenses. These non-native plants, animals, and microorganisms are extremely harmful to our environment regardless of whether they occur in natural or agricultural settings. Some egregious examples include:

- Invasive weeds cost U.S. farmers over \$27 billion in yield losses and control costs annually
- Invasive weeds cause more than \$1 billion in pasture forage losses for U.S. producers
- Leafy spurge alone causes a 75% decrease in livestock carrying capacity in U.S. pastures and rangeland
- Invasive weeds have decreased the selling price of U.S. grazingland by over 80%
- Fire ants in Texas cause over \$300 million in damages annually to livestock, wildlife, and public health and over \$200 million is spent each year on control
- Invasive insects cost U.S. farmers more than \$13.9 billion annually in crop losses and an additional \$1.2 billion is spent on control

The Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council applauds the efforts of Congress in passing the 2002 Farm Security Act which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to invest in invasive species management. Specifically, Title II (Conservation), Subtitle D (Environmental Quality Incentive Program), 1240B(e)(2) allows the Secretary to "accord great significance" to land stewardship practices that promote management of invasive species. Such provisions helped to create, for example, the Colorado Invasive Plant Program in which EQIP incentive payments were awarded in 2006 and 2007 to private and public partnerships to manage invasive weeds on private lands. In Montana, EQIP incentive payments have leveraged state and private funds to manage invasive plants throughout watersheds. These programs have fostered collaborative efforts among farmers, ranchers, and their neighbors for better land stewardship and represent perhaps the best means to deter the insidious threat posed by invasive species. **INWAC encourages Congress to enhance this investment by prioritizing invasive species management practices in EQIP and other Conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill.**