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## **MT Dept. of Agriculture Shares Best Practices for Hay Shipments to Prevent Noxious Weeds and Pests**

**Helena, Mont.** – As Montana agricultural producers strive to find adequate feed for livestock during severe drought conditions and a damaging wildfire season, the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is issuing guidance for out-of-county or state shipments of hay to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and other invasive pests.

“The need for hay far outweighs our supply right now in Montana,” said Acting Director Christy Clark. “We recognize the need to find hay for our producers, but there can be some very serious consequences if we don’t do our due diligence in making sure that hay donations and shipments from other states aren’t bringing weeds and insects that are not currently present in Montana with them.”

Hay being transported from other states and counties has the potential to introduce or spread noxious and invasive weed species, insect pests, and plant diseases. Use the following best management practices to mitigate and prevent their introduction and spread:

- Ask where the hay was grown/donated from, and use certified weed free forage, if available
- Feed hay in an area that can be easily monitored for new weeds for several years
- Coordinate with your local weed district or MSU Extension office to monitor areas and identify unknown weeds and pests
- Control weeds before they produce seed, and defer moving livestock through any area with a new weed species until it is removed or contained.

The MDA Noxious Weed Program is available to assist producers in their decision to use hay from out of state. Please contact [Jasmine Reimer](#), 406-444-3140, for more information.

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