

IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NOXIOUS WEED FREE FORAGE & STRAW CERTIFICATION

2023

PROGRAM SUMMARY



INVASIVE
SPECIES

OF
IDAHO





BACKGROUND

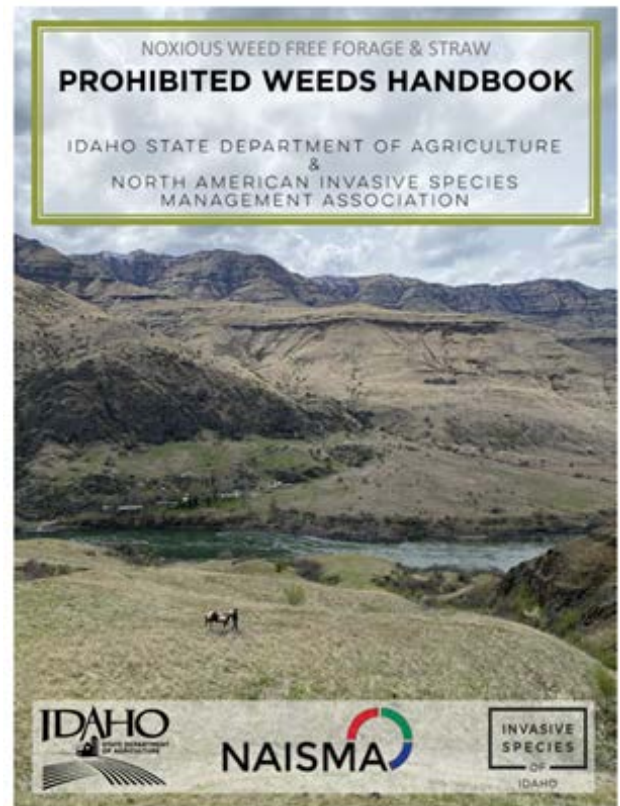
In an effort to limit the introduction and spread of noxious weeds through forage and straw onto Idaho United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's (ISDA) Noxious Weed Free Forage and Straw (NWFF&S) Certification Program was implemented in 1995. ISDA is a member of a voluntary national organization called the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) and has incorporated its forage and straw inspection procedures, called the NAISMA Weed Free Forage Program, into the NWFF&S Rules. The purpose of this organization is to set minimum requirements for uniform participation of the various states in the program. The NWFF&S Certification Program allows for the transportation and sale of certified Idaho forage and straw products into and through states and other boundaries where restrictions are placed on such commodities.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Inspector trainings began in March 2023 and were held in Boise, Post Falls, Lapwai, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls and Challis. Any inspector who was not available for an in-person training attended a virtual presentation that was recorded and made available for any additional inspectors who wished to be certified later into the season.

Training resources were added to the Invasive Species of Idaho website at <https://invasivespecies.idaho.gov/inspectors>. Several office support staff who did not seek certification also attended these trainings with the desire to have a better understanding of the program and its requirements.

A new NWFFS Prohibited Weeds Handbook was compiled and distributed to county noxious weed offices for use by inspectors as a plant identification guide. A PDF copy was made available and housed within the program's website (link above). This handbook omits information on Idaho listed aquatic noxious weeds but does include all Idaho listed terrestrial noxious weeds, along with plants identified in NAISMA's prohibited list. It was designed to be a one-stop resource for inspectors when looking for information on plant species of concern within the program. NWFFS brochures and flyers were also updated, printed, and distributed to counties.

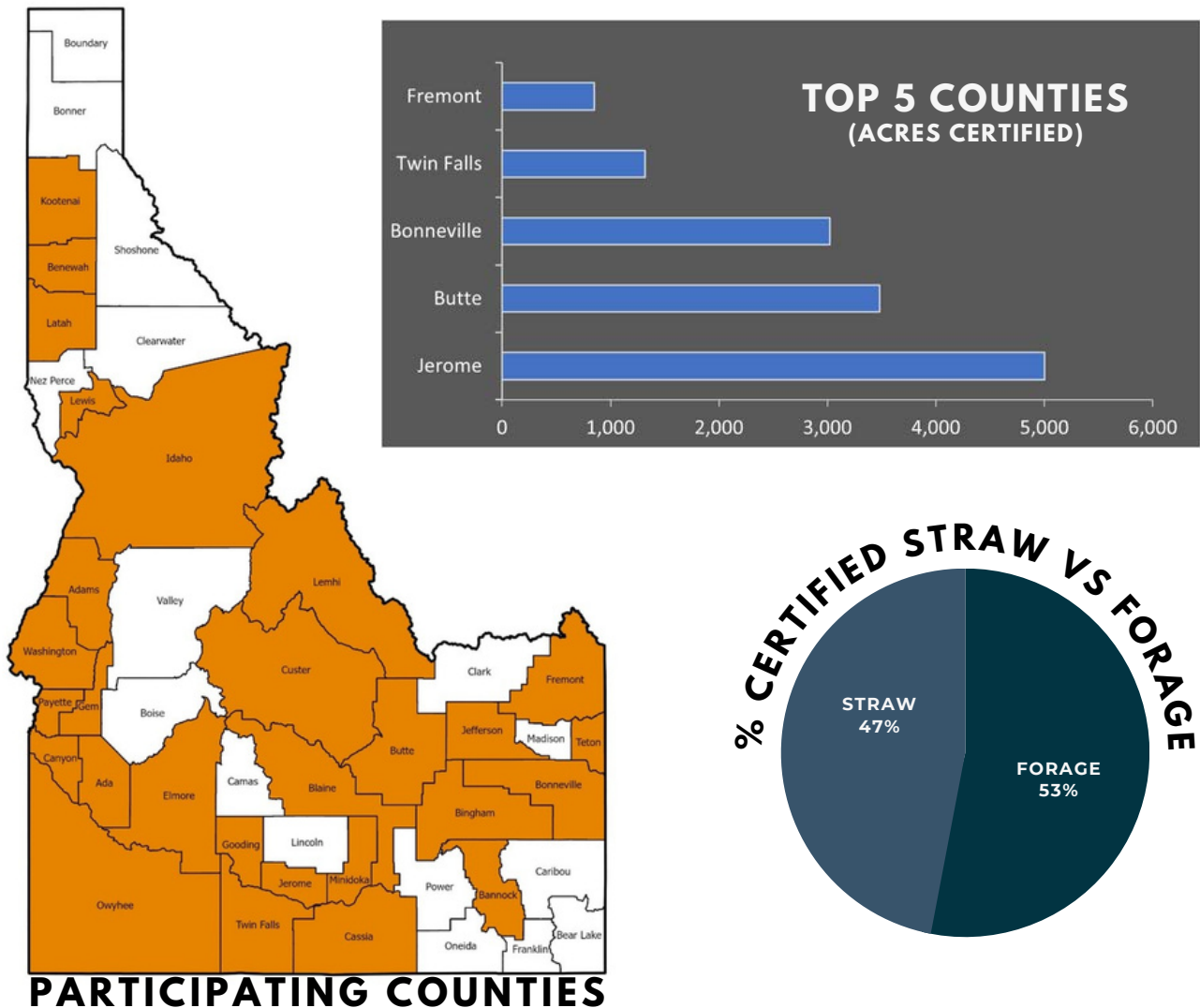


New vinyl bale tags were commissioned to replace the old tags which were reportedly "tearing apart" when applied to bales. Twine size availability also changed in 2023. The manufacturer of NAISMA's custom twine is now only producing rolls in 9600/170, 6500/240, and 4000/400 strength. Growers have been notified of this change and have adjusted accordingly.



PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2023, the NWFFS Program trained 60 inspectors across the state to certify fields as noxious weed free within their respective jurisdictions. Across all 28 participating counties, 18,068 acres of forage and straw were inspected. Of the fields inspected, 17,836 acres were certified as noxious weed free with 99% of those acres certified to the NAISMA Standard.



71.6% of all forage & straw certified was remanufactured into products such as pellets, cubes, bagged straw, & compressed forage bales.

There were 6,104 fewer acres certified in 2023 than 2022, following a trend over the last three seasons. Decreases in inspections may be correlated to drought conditions in 2021, followed by the uncharacteristic cool and wet conditions experienced in June of 2022 which caused a slow start for that season. Hay prices have also been reported as high in 2022 and leading into 2023. This may have contributed to a decreased desire/need for growers to certify products as weed free in an attempt to capture that premium.

