

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: WORKING WITH GROUPS IN WEED CONTROL. Ed L. Fields, Director, Crawford County Weed Department Girard, KS 66743.

I was appointed weed director of Crawford County, Kansas in 2008 with very little money budgeted to my department. I was faced with an infestation of musk thistle on land that was in bankrupt proceedings, leaving little or no way to set any control in a timely method. Realizing that I had very few ways to solve this problem and knowing the boy scouts from my past, I set out on a different approach. Upon contacting the area scout master, we decided that a coordinated approach of education and harvesting the seed production would work to benefit both scouts and neighboring land owners. After orientating the scouts on the musk thistle and the reasons we need to control the problem, I received several questions that led to various weed related facts and information. I continued with a brief demonstration on how to harvest the seed heads. After three hours of harvesting we bagged 547 lbs. of thistle seed heads. This effort did not control the entire musk thistle problem but made a difference in the future seed production. The scouts received points for merit badges for participating and everyone benefited greatly.

Upon completing the boy scout project and publishing a subsequent article in the local newspaper, I was given an opportunity to work with the public regarding weed control with our local farm radio station's disc jockey. The program is called "Day with Dalton on the Farm". A phone call to the station's farm director and the landowner to coordinate a date and time was the first step. During the allowed live radio spots every 30 minutes, we harvested seed heads. After the radio show I received several calls from the general public who had been listening to this program in regards to musk thistle control.

Upon completing an inspection of a pasture in Farlington and finding musk & bull thistle, I contacted the land owner. The landowner informed me they had a medical condition called Encephalopathy (no tolerance of any chemicals.) Again I stepped outside the box and contacted the Girard High School Ag teacher and we worked out a program for his students to conduct a non-chemical approach to solve the problem.

In summary, the education regarding the appearance, growth patterns, and controlling process of Musk Thistle and Bull Thistle has been beneficial to all that participated. Education along with active community involvement, particularly the Boy Scouts of America and local agriculture students, has increased the awareness of the importance of noxious weed control.

I would like to thank the following for their contribution:

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