

Weed control beefed up

By Naeema Siddiqua
Staff Writer

The Alberta government has a new and improved set of policies to weed out the weed problem on farmland and natural spaces.

On June 16, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development passed a re-written Weed Control Act and Regulation that expands the list of invasive plants and adds improvements to enforcement and appeal processes, a move applauded by Stony Plain farmer and local director of the **Alberta Farley Commission** Albert Wagner.

"Some of these weeds are very invasive," he said. "The bigger problem is with land that's being developed so it is left unattended and (weeds) spread to farmland. The rural municipalities are good at detecting and controlling, but not so much with the urban area."

A major part of the act aims to regulate noxious weeds (those that must be controlled) and prohibited noxious weeds (those that must be destroyed). The act also regulates weed seeds through various control measures, such as inspection and enforcement, together with provisions for penalties in cases of non-compliance. It also mandates the licensing of seed cleaning plants and mechanisms.

Failure to comply with the act could result in a fine of \$5,000 and if individuals fail to comply with a Minister's notice to control or destroy noxious weeds, they will face a fine of \$1,000 for each day they harbour the weeds.

The expanded list is also an additional mechanism to increase Alberta's ability to be vigilant in keeping prohibited noxious weeds out of the province.

Many of the plants added to the list are there as the result of an extensive study of invasive plant species found in bordering provinces and states, which may pose a threat to Alberta's eco-system and agriculture industry.

In addition to the new legislation, Alberta also has supplementary early detection and rapid response to weeds programs such as the Crop Pest Surveillance System and the Alberta Weed Survey.

For a complete list of the weeds and the new regulations visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca. To find details online click on the information tab, then click on the Diseases/Insects/Pests link, and look under the legislation heading.

naeemas@bownet.com

