Diana Griffith

From: Chandler, Monika (MDA) <monika.chandler@state.mn.us>
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2016 11:56 AM
To: Michael McDonough
Cc: Angela Gupta (agupta@umn.edu)
Subject: Palmer amaranth and Elimination of Target Invasive Plants Phase 2

Dear Michael McDonough,

Our LCCMR project **Elimination of Target Invasive Plants Phase 2** has enabled us to respond quickly to an emerging invasive plant threat called Palmer amaranth, *Amaranthus palmeri*. Palmer amaranth is native to arid parts of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. It has spread to the southeastern and Midwestern US and become problematic. It grows very quickly to heights reaching 10 feet. It also produces massive amount of seed. These qualities give it a competitive advantage against row crops and native vegetation plantings. During the battle against Palmer amaranth, this plant developed resistance to multiple classes of herbicides. Palmer amaranth now causes extensive losses where it is abundant including in corn and soybeans.

Palmer amaranth was first found in Minnesota in late September 2016 in a first year conservation planting. This planting is part of a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) program to increase pollinator habitat. Some other fields planted with the same seed mix also had Palmer amaranth. There is an active investigation into the seed source. There are 13 sites/landowners with 30 conservation plantings where the seed mix was planted. We are fortunate. Iowa has 60-70 first year conservation plantings with Palmer amaranth.

On October 27, 2016, Palmer amaranth was declared an agricultural emergency. This enabled limited use of MDA's emergency funds and emergency response personnel. The infrastructure our project developed was utilized to respond quickly. One immediate use of emergency funds was to amend our contract with Conservation Corps Minnesota to include Palmer amaranth management with flame weeding and prescribed fire. Our contract total was increased by $15,000 from $175,000 to $190,000. We began incinerating Palmer plants including seedheads using propane and drip torches on 11/07/16. Additional flame weeding is planned for early December. Our aim is to destroy as much seed as possible. Photos from this effort are available in the web album Palmer amaranth treatments Fall 2016. We also plan to include Palmer amaranth in our training workshops that are a part of this project. We will request a work plan amendment to include Palmer amaranth with our status report due at the end of November.

To be clear about the use of funds, Palmer amaranth control treatments will not be paid for with ENRTF dollars and will be invoiced separately. Given the conservation planting pathway, it is important to train professional vegetation managers to identify and report Palmer. Palmer amaranth will be included in our project's education and outreach so ENRTF dollars will be used for this purpose. Please let me know if there is a problem with using ENRTF for education.

Early detection and rapid response to Palmer amaranth in Minnesota may prevent significant harm. Our project structure enabled our rapid response and is a good example of why this infrastructure is necessary.

Thank you.

Monika Chandler

Noxious and Invasive Weeds and Biological Control Program Lead
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street North, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-201-6537 (office), 612-327-3857 (mobile) Monika.Chandler@state.mn.us
Noxious and Invasive Weed Program, Biological Control Program