

Palmer Amaranth in Commercial Feed Pilot Program

What is this pilot program and why is it being conducted?

Palmer amaranth is a prohibited noxious weed that has developed resistance to multiple classes of herbicides and can cause extensive corn and soybean crop losses. Palmer amaranth is documented in 28 states including South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, but has yet to become established in Minnesota. The goal of this pilot program is to better understand the risk for Palmer amaranth in feed pathways, help find solutions to prevent its spread, and to protect agricultural operations throughout the state.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) regulates noxious weeds in animal feed using multiple tools:

- The [Minnesota Commercial Feed Law](#), which prohibits the sale of adulterated feed.
- [Minnesota's Noxious Weed Law](#), which prohibits the transportation, propagation, or sale of this plant.
- Minnesota [Seed Law](#) and [Screenings Act](#), which prohibits it in seed or screenings used as feed.

At this time, the MDA recommends following [the USDA standard for Niger seed devitalization](#) as a heat treatment to devitalize weed seeds including Palmer amaranth in feed or feed ingredients.

Traceback investigations in Minnesota have identified millet and sunflowers as possible higher risk commodities for the spread of Palmer amaranth. This pilot program will focus on these whole grain commodities by collecting commercial feed and feed ingredient samples from feed manufacturing facilities. Fifteen to thirty samples will be collected from late summer into fall 2023 as part of this pilot program.

What samples will be collected and what will happen with them?

MDA inspectors from the Commercial Feed Program and the Seed Program will jointly collect samples from feed manufacturing facilities. Inspectors will obtain representative samples of commodities following standard procedures for sampling and will obtain a minimum 500-gram sample of commercial feed and/or feed ingredient.

What will the MDA be testing for in the sample?

Samples from the inspected feed will be submitted to the MDA Plant and Seed Analysis lab where seed analysts will visually inspect the sample for amaranth seeds. Any amaranth seeds found in testing will be submitted for genetic testing to determine if Palmer amaranth is present. If Palmer amaranth is present, the lab will also conduct a test to determine if the Palmer amaranth seed is viable.

What happens if the MDA discovers Palmer amaranth in your sample?

If viable Palmer amaranth is discovered, the MDA will issue a communication to the company notifying them of this finding. The MDA will request a corrective action plan outlining measures to mitigate the risk of this prohibited weed seed in commercial feed and/or feed ingredients going forward.

What will happen after the initial phase of the pilot program?

The MDA will evaluate the data and provide a summary report of the findings from this pilot program to help increase understanding about viable Palmer amaranth in commercial feed or feed ingredients. The MDA will collaborate with stakeholders to determine appropriate mechanisms for continued protection of Minnesota's agricultural resources.

For more details on Palmer amaranth and this pilot program, visit:

www.mda.state.mn.us/pa-location-sources

Photo: Approximately 70 amaranth seeds on a dime.
Jared Goplen, University of Minnesota

