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Weed-Free Mulch Needed to Help Lands Burned by Fires

Wheat & Barley Straw Must be Inspected Prior to Harvest

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – Land affected by recent fires may also face severe erosion and flooding issues; mulch is frequently used to mitigate erosion, however, it is required that mulch used on public lands be certified “weed-free.” The Colorado Department of Agriculture reminds wheat and barley producers that, in order to provide certified weed-free mulch, the crop must be inspected by CDA before it is harvested.

“Mulch is the most economical way to provide cover and prevent erosion,” said Don Gallegos, CDA coordinator of the Certified Weed-Free Forage Program. “We hope there is enough straw from the wheat and barley harvests this year to meet the demand brought about by recent and on-going fires. But, it is important for producers to know that before they can contribute to this growing demand, their straw must be certified as weed-free.”

To participate in the state’s weed-free mulch/forage program, growers must contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture for an inspection prior to harvest. The inspection ensures that there are no propagative plant parts of noxious weeds. Once the crop is certified weed-free, producers will be added to a directory. Counties, contractors and other buyers will then have access to the directory through CDA’s website and direct mailing.

The use of certified weed-free forage and mulch is intended to reduce the spread of weeds on public lands and parks. Noxious weeds harm native plant communities and wildlife habitat, reduce crop yields and land values, damage watersheds, increase soil erosion and poison animals.

Contact Don Gallegos, CDA's Certified Weed-Free Forage Program coordinator, at (303) 239-4150 or email Donz.Gallegos@state.co.us.

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