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MEDUSAHEAD MANAGEMENT TIPS

Medusahead wildrye, a member of the Grass family, is a winter annual that germinates in the fall and overwinters as a seedling. It gets its name from the twisting awns that resemble the head of the Gorgon Medusa, of Greek Mythology. Medusahead has long awns that emerge from the seed head and point outward and upward. Reproduction is only by seed. **Seed longevity is around two years.** Medusahead has wiry stems with few short, narrow leaves. Plants usually reach heights of six inches to two feet tall. Heavy infestations of medusahead can form dense stands of seedlings and create a thick layer of thatch that inhibits the germination of other plants. Medusahead has very little forage value due to the high silica content in the plant.



Management and control efforts must be planned for several years on the existing site in order to prevent seed formation/dispersal and to monitor for, and treat appropriately, any new plants that emerge from seed. If seed formation can be prevented for a few years, there will be a significant decrease in the abundance of medusahead.

Prevention is the number one management strategy for medusahead. Medusahead has a very limited presence in Gallatin County. If you think you have found this plant, please contact your local county Weed District.

Effective control measures for the management of medusahead include:

1. **Mechanical (hand pulling):** Diligent hand pulling or grubbing can provide control of very small infestations of medusahead. Hand pulling is not feasible on more established infestations.
2. **Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law!** Calibrate your equipment to ensure that you are adding the proper amount of herbicide to your tank. The following herbicides are commonly used to control medusahead. **Do NOT use these herbicides in lawns, turf or ornamental settings – read the label.** *Timing of herbicide application is very important – see specific herbicides below for timing recommendations.*

Mixing rates in small backpack or hand sprayers are as follows:

Esplanade 200 SC:	2/3 – 1 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in late summer/fall; pre-emergent). Not for use on grazed areas.
Rejuvra:	2/3 – 1 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in late summer/fall; pre-emergent). Can be used on grazed areas.
Plateau:	3/4 – 2 teaspoons herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in the fall).
Glyphosate:	2 - 3 teaspoons herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in early spring when desirable grasses are still dormant). Glyphosate will kill grasses and forbs.

Rates in large sprayers are as follows:

Esplanade 200 SC:	3.5 – 5 oz herbicide per acre (apply in late summer/fall; pre-emergent). Not for use on grazed areas.
Rejuvra:	3.5 – 5 oz herbicide per acre (apply in late summer/fall; pre-emergent). Can be used on grazed areas.
Plateau:	4 - 12 oz herbicide per acre (apply in the fall).
Glyphosate:	12 - 16 oz herbicide per acre (apply in early spring when desirable grasses are still dormant). Glyphosate will kill grasses and forbs.

NOTE: Adding a surfactant to your tank mix may enhance the performance of your herbicide and is required for certain herbicides (read the label). Add 0.5 - 1 oz per gallon of water for backpack sprayers or 1 – 2 pints per 100 gallons for large sprayers.

3. **Grazing:** Prescribed livestock grazing in the spring, prior to seed formation, may effectively control medusahead in localized areas.
4. **Cultural (revegetation):** Revegetation of infested stands is imperative when using prescribed grazing, mowing and herbicide control.
5. **Integrated management:** Management of medusahead is more effective when more than one management strategy is used.