

Title III CHAPTER 24. NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

§ 2401. Declared public and common nuisance.

The existence of growth of a noxious weed is declared to be a public and common nuisance.

(3 Del. C. 1953, § 2401; 57 Del. Laws, c. 701; 63 Del. Laws, c. 360, § 1.)

§ 2402. Department of Agriculture - Investigations; designation of species; rules; programs of control; acceptance of grants; Weed Advisory Committee.

(a) The state Department of Agriculture may make such investigations, studies and determinations as it may deem advisable in order to ascertain the extent of growth and infestation of noxious weeds in this State, and the effect of such species on agricultural production.

(b) The Department shall designate species of weeds which adversely affect or threaten agriculture production as noxious weeds, and may promulgate such rules and regulations as in its judgment are necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this chapter and may alter or suspend such rules when necessary.

(c) The Department may institute programs of control and eradication.

(d) The Department may enter into agreements with any county or subdivision of this State, with any adjoining state, or with agencies of the federal or state government to effect a program of control and eradication.

(e) The Department may accept, use, or expend such aid, gift, grant, or loan as may from time to time be made available from any source, public or private, for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

(f) A Weed Advisory Committee consisting of 5 persons shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Secretary on matters concerning noxious weed control in the State. The Committee shall consist of a cooperative extension representative from the University of Delaware, chosen by the Director of Cooperative Extension Service; the Noxious Weed Specialist, State Department of Agriculture; and 1 person from each of the 3 counties to be chosen by the Governor's Council on Agriculture.

(3 Del. C. 1953, § 2402; 57 Del. Laws, c. 701; 63 Del. Laws, c. 360, §§ 2-4.)

§ 2403. Same - Agreements relating to eradication.

The state Department of Agriculture may enter into an agreement with any designated county in this State for the purpose of control and eradication of designated noxious weed within that county. When such an agreement is executed and certified in writing to the Secretary of State, the Department and the county may conduct surveys to determine the location and amount of infestations of designated noxious weed within that county, and may provide technical and financial assistance to landowners in a cooperative control or

eradication program, and may effect a program of mowing, spraying, or other control or eradication practices on road rights-of-way, drainage ditch banks, parks, playgrounds, and other public or private lands. The agreement between the Department and county may be terminated by either party on 30 days written notice.

(3 Del. C. 1953, § 2403; 57 Del. Laws, c. 701; 63 Del. Laws, c. 360, § 5.)

§ 2404. Importation; transportation; elimination.

(a) It shall be unlawful to import designated noxious weeds into this State, or to transport designated noxious weeds within this State, in any form capable of growth, except for purposes of research with the prior written approval of the state Department of Agriculture. It shall be unlawful to knowingly contaminate any uninfested land or roadway with designated noxious weeds through the movement of rootstocks, seed, soil, mulch, nursery stock, farm machinery, or other medium.

(b) It shall be unlawful to knowingly allow designated noxious weeds to set seed on any land, or to allow any portion of a designated noxious weed plant to reach a height of 24 inches; and it shall be the duty of each landowner or person who has the present right to possess and/or use the land to mow, cultivate, treat with chemicals, or use such other practices as may be prescribed by the Department of Agriculture as effective in preventing seed set on designated noxious weed infestations or in elimination of the designated noxious weed plant.

(3 Del. C. 1953, § 2404; 57 Del. Laws, c. 701; 59 Del. Laws, c. 160, § 1; 63 Del. Laws, c. 360, §§ 6, 7.)

§ 2405. Prosecution of violations.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter may result in the assessment of a civil penalty. No civil penalty shall be imposed until an administrative hearing is held before the Secretary or the Secretary's designee after due notice has been given to the landowner or person who possesses or has use of the land in accordance with § 10122 of Title 29. Provided, however, a landowner or person who possesses or has the use of that land may enter into a written agreement with the Department of Agriculture specifying terms and conditions of a program for the control and eradication of designated noxious weeds, and so long as all the terms and conditions are being complied with, there is no violation of this chapter as to the land covered by the agreement.

3 Del. C. 1953, § 2405; 57 Del. Laws, c. 701; 63 Del. Laws, c. 360, § 8; 70 Del. Laws, c. 285, § 1.)

§ 2406. Hearing procedure and appeals.

All hearings which are held to enforce the provisions of this chapter shall be conducted by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee. The landowner or

person who possesses or has use of the land shall have the right to appear personally, and to be represented by counsel, and to provide evidence and witnesses in the landowner's or person's own behalf. The Department shall preserve a full record of the proceeding. A transcript of the record may be purchased by any person interested in such hearing on payment to the Department the cost of preparing such transcript. The Department shall issue a decision in writing to the landowner or person who possesses or has use of the land within 30 days of the conclusion of the hearing. Any individual who feels aggrieved by an action of the Department as a result of an action resulting from a hearing held under this chapter may take an appeal, within 30 days of such action, to the Superior Court, and after full hearing the Court shall make such decree as seems just and proper. Written notice of such appeal, together with the grounds therefor, shall be served upon the Secretary of the Department.

70 Del. Laws, c. 285, § 2.)

§ 2407. Penalties.

- (a) Any person who interferes with the Department of Agriculture in the enforcement of this chapter as determined in an administrative hearing, shall be assessed a civil penalty of no less than \$50 nor more than \$500 on each count.
- (b) Any person who refuses to comply with the provisions of this chapter shall be assessed a civil penalty of a minimum of \$100 or \$25 per acre of land upon which noxious weeds have set seed, whichever is greater.
- (c) The proceeds of any fines or penalties imposed under this chapter shall be deposited into an appropriated special fund account in the Department of Agriculture. These funds shall be used to support the noxious weed eradication programs of the Department of Agriculture.

70 Del. Laws, c. 285, § 3.)

§ 2408. Cutting and spraying of noxious weeds by the Department of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation shall cut down, or cause to be cut down, noxious weeds growing in the rights-of-way over which it has charge or supervision, as often in each year as shall be sufficient to prevent them from going to seed. When particular problem areas have been identified, they shall be sprayed to eradicate the weed.

64 Del. Laws, c. 285, § 1; 70 Del. Laws, c. 285, § 3.)