

## NEWS COLUMN

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### **Get Ready to Fight Canada Thistles**

Land owners and renters need to get ready for action against Canada thistle.

Give special attention for fence lines and roadsides.

Canada thistles are now showing flower buds. That means the clock starts running to prevent another seed crop.

Research shows seed becomes viable 7 to 10 days from first flower.

Warmer temperatures this month will really push the weeds.

Most producers have plans in place for crop infestations, but many times the fence lines, road sides and out-of-the-way spots don't get attention. There is still time to gear up for treating these areas.

Portable sprayers or sprayers with special boom and nozzle set-ups make treating these areas more convenient.

Bottom line is mow or treat-do something before another seed crop sets.

Everyone needs to do their part to stop the spread this year.

Special recommendations are listed in annual weed guides available at the County Extension and Weed and Pest Supervisor offices across the state.

### **Still Time to Vaccinate horses for West Nile Virus**

There's still a need to vaccinate horses against West Nile Virus. According to SDSU Extension Veterinarian Russ Daly the number of cases of West Nile Virus in horses is down significantly in recent years, due mainly to the success of the vaccine. The mosquito-transmitted disease is still a threat in South Dakota, and non-vaccinated horses are still at risk.

Vaccinating horses for West Nile is a safe and effective management procedure. Field observations suggest that vaccinations prevent the vast majority of clinical cases of West Nile Virus infection in horses, and that horses that have been vaccinated are much less likely to die if they do become infected with West Nile Virus.

West Nile Virus vaccine requires annual boosters. It is recommended that horses receive their boosters in May, to coincide with the onset of mosquito season.

Since West Nile Virus infections usually peak in late August, it is not too late to vaccinate horses right now if it has not been done yet.

If horses have not previously been vaccinated, a two-dose schedule is recommended. Different vaccine products will vary slightly in the interval between vaccinations, so label directions should be closely followed. Foals experiencing their first mosquito season in South Dakota should get a series of two or three vaccine doses, generally beginning when they are three to four months of age.

As with any animal health issue, horse owners need to consult with their veterinarians for specific recommendations for their animals.