

Public Hearing for West Virginia Department of Agriculture's proposed legislative rule 61CSR14A "Noxious Weeds".

November 3, 2017 5:30 p.m.

West Virginia University
333 Evansdale Drive
Room G06 Agricultural Sciences Building
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-6108

Present: WVDA Staff

Joe Hatton/Deputy Commissioner, Tim Brown/Director of Plant Industries Division, Crescent Gallagher/Communications Director, Jodee Martin/Executive Assistant (Recorder of meeting)

Speakers:

H.R. Scott, Charles Sypolt, Julie Robinson, Corey Lambert, Steve Butler, Rakesh Chandran

The hearing was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Tim Brown/Director of Plant Industries Division for West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

H. R. Scott/WVU Extension. I am here on behalf of the local farmers in the area. I work a regional area. Rakesh is here also, and he is a weed specialist. We deal with calls about both of these constantly from various producers in our county. We totally support getting this on the Noxious Weed list. We are having a lot of problems in reclamation areas, as well as at the edge of the forest fields, and pasture fields. We feel that this will be a good thing.

Charles Sypolt/Retired teacher from Glenville State College: As a retired teacher I am used to speaking for at least 50 minutes. I think I am the cause of this. I have a lot of barberry on my own farm, and it is very difficult to kill. If it gets up to three foot you cannot do it with a mattock, you have to use chemicals, and that is not the best thing to be putting into the environment. It is expensive, and time consuming. It reduces pasture, and there are environmental concerns when we used herbicides. It is a personal health issue for people my age that are out stumbling around in the woods. Also, the fact that you are carrying around a mixture on your back that is not good to handle. It hinders fire protection for foresters and reduces regeneration. It is an obstacle in timber cruising, reduces area for land use. It is costly, and time consuming for anyone who has ever planted this, and I hate to admit that I have planted it for landscaping and for ornamental uses in the old days. It is a nasty plant to try to plant, and do anything else with. I think we should try and find alternatives in landscaping that we didn't have ten to fifteen years ago. I certainly don't think we need to continue planting something that is as invasive as the honeysuckle, Autumn Olive and the Multiflora rose. That is my whole speech.

Julie Robinson/Executive Director of the WV Nursery and Landscape Association: I actually didn't plan to speak I had a couple of questions. I think we are also concerned about invasive plants, but our members were taken by surprise when we heard about the ban. Of course we are

concerned about financial loss that growers and nursery owners will incur. We are advocating, if this should go forward, a reasonable implementation period so that they can minimize their stock as much as possible. We would really like there to be some type of Invasive Species Advisory Council, a lot of other states have that with representation from scientists, industry as well as government, so that all sides of things can be considered in the future. I don't know what else is being considered. That is a concern from us. I know the jury is still out as far as research on cultivars go, but it seems I have seen a lot of research indicating they are less invasive to non-invasive barberry species. I know that New York had banned Barberry, and recently, based on research from the University of Connecticut had reintroduced or allowed room for cultivars, so there is wiggle room for that.

Corey Lambert: I am a member of the Farm Bureau and a farmer also. I have been around Barberry, and did some landscaping during college. On the farming side of it, it is hard to deal with because it is creeping into our pastures. We have a lot of land and its tough on tractors, it is tough on equipment, disc mowers, and brush hogs. I do not like dealing with chemicals any more than I have to and I prefer a mechanical method. I have seen a lot of it creeping into our land, especially in Taylor County where we have a lot of housing developments. I see it getting worse.

Steve Butler/Administrator WV Farm Bureau: I am here on behalf of the Farm Bureau and support the ban on Barberry. Many farmers have seen as Corey explained, this is creeping into pastures along the wood line. I myself am a farmer in southern Upshur county and have seen it more and more each year. I have seen a lot more this year along the fence line and along the road. It is like the Autumn Olive and Tartarian Honeysuckle it is becoming more and more invasive each year. I speak in support of listing this as an invasive species.

Rakesh Chandran/WVU: I am a weed specialist for the Extension Service. I don't have much to add but I do agree that we are getting more and more calls about Japanese Barberry along with a few other weeds that are not on the Noxious Weed list, which include common Milkweed, and Multiflora rose. I understand Julie's concerns, and if there is a hybrid that do not spread or are not as invasive as the cultivated varieties of Barberry that we have in the state it would be good, but from what I understand they hybridize with each other and it is difficult to find cultivars that survive. As we move forward something to keep in mind if there are varieties that are not as invasive or that justify sale, it may merit some concentration. Otherwise I consider this something that is difficult to control in pastures and other types of lands.

Tim Brown adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

