

2026 FRANKLIN COUNTY CONTROL PLAN

The purpose of the Noxious Weed Control Plan is to outline for the Kansas Department of Agriculture Plant Health Division the methods which will be used to promote Noxious Weed Control within Franklin County during 2026.

This document will spell out the priorities by which we operate in the Noxious Weed Department. County Commissioners have the option to shift our areas of emphasis at anytime during the course of the year for budgetary or philosophical reasons.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL PHILOSOPHY

There are six noxious weed problems in Franklin County: Musk Thistle, Field Bindweed, Johnsongrass, Sericea Lespedeza, and Cut-leaf Teasel and Common Teasel. Musk Thistle and Teasel receive the highest level of attention based on the fact that they are easily spread by the wind onto adjacent property. We believe that landowners have a right to be protected from being seeded by their neighbors. We do not hesitate to force a landowner to control their Musk Thistle/Teasel after a period of time trying to convince them to control the problem.

Field Bindweed is a problem on private lands and county right-of-way and can be easily spread. We offer chemicals to help control Field Bindweed and help with the enforcement of control.

Johnsongrass can be spread fairly easily and is rapidly becoming a problem. We will be putting more resources towards the control of Johnsongrass in 2026.

Sericea Lespedeza seems to be spreading throughout the County. Landowners are becoming more aware of this weed. Field Bindweed, Johnsongrass and Sericea Lespedeza receive almost equal amount of attention from our County.

Cut-leaf teasel and Common Teasel were new additions to the list in 2021. Franklin County declared it as a County Option Noxious Weed through the

Kansas Department of Agriculture. We will be treating Teasel at the same time as we are treating Musk Thistle. It is located mainly along the intersecting points of the Highway systems and our county road infrastructure, but is invading other areas of the county as well.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL ON COUNTY PROPERTY

Franklin County operates under a county-wide road maintenance plan. While individual townships exist for many functions (cemeteries, fire districts, community buildings, etc.), roadways are controlled by the County. Franklin County has 1,135 miles of roads. Approximately 200 miles of these roadways are hard surfaced roads with the balance being gravel or dirt roads.

In addition to right-of-ways, Franklin County owns several parcels of property in the county and four radio tower sites to keep weed free throughout the year.

There are approximately 10,000 people living in the area outside the cities in Franklin County. We believe it is important to set an example to landowners by controlling noxious weeds on county properties. It is impossible to control 100% of the noxious weed problems on the right-of-way, but because we have worked on problem areas over the past several years, we find the problem areas are improving.

Franklin County has a program for landowners who object to chemical applications on the right-of-way along their property. These areas are posted with signs to assist our applicators in avoiding spraying these

areas. The landowner is expected to control noxious weeds on these areas. If the problems are not addressed, we have the right to spray the area. (See appendix).

TREATMENT PLANS

In 2025, Franklin County chose to start using a Custom Blend of chemicals on County right-of ways. This custom blend consists of Tordon 22K, Freelex, Highnoon, Escort and Liberate chemicals. By using this blend of chemicals we can treat most of the noxious weeds in our county with a one-pass treatment of the roadsides instead of having to go back and treat the same areas multiple times with different individual chemicals. This is proving to be cost effective in not only chemicals, but also in labor and wear and tear on our trucks and spray equipment. Another benefit of this blend of chemicals is that it covers time periods from pre-emergence clear through to the seeding stage.

The **Musk Thistle** which we have on county roadsides is mostly scattered. We solid spray in early spring or late fall, using the custom blend mix, on areas which were adjacent to infested properties from the previous year. Weather permitting, we begin spraying in late March to early April.

We use one truck until late April or early May (see appendix for truck and employee schedules). We begin to use 2 people in the spray trucks when the thistles start to bolt. With two people per truck, we can spot spray both sides of the roadways as we come across problem areas. Thistle will begin to bud and/or bloom by mid to late May. With the custom blend mix

of chemicals, we feel we can get better treatment in place to help eradicate the thistles in a timelier matter. We will continue to spray for thistles until seeding begins.

If we find heavily infested areas where spraying is not going to be effective, we can pluck the heads, bag them, and dispose of them where they will not infest other properties.

Field Bindweed is a growing problem on the County right-of-ways because it is easily spread by road graders. We make every attempt to control Field Bindweed along the right-of-way while we are treating Musk Thistle in the spring and early summer months. We treat Field Bindweed with the Custom Blend chemical mix. Applicators mark the treated areas on a map so that we can go back to problem areas after the conclusion of Musk Thistle season and we can also do follow up in the fall.

Johnsongrass is becoming a bigger problem on the right-of-way. Small spots are treated when we treat Musk Thistle and Field Bindweed. We use our side tanks on our spray trucks to carry the proper chemicals for Johnsongrass.

In early season, we treat Johnsongrass with 1 oz per acre rate of Sulfosulfuron (OutRider). In late season, we boost this rate to 1.5 oz per acre.

Sericea Lespedeza is found on our right-of-ways. We are currently marking those spots during the June through July period for treatment with our Custom Blend chemical mix at a rate of 1oz per acre.

Common Teasel and Cut-leaf Teasel have very similar growth patterns and biological make-up of Musk Thistle. We handle the treatment with the Custom Blend chemicals at a rate of 16 oz per acre. We do a fall application on areas that are more heavily infested, as well.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL ON STATE PROPERTY

We do not treat any KDOT right-of-ways. KDOT hires private contractors for noxious weed control.

Whenever we find or have a problem with noxious weeds on the Prairie Spirit Trail, or the Flint Hills Trail, we will contact the manager of the Trails and they will take care of the problem. The Prairie Spirit Trail runs from Ottawa south to the Anderson County line. The Flint Hills Trail runs east and west from Miami County to Osage County lines.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL WITHIN CITY LIMITS

Noxious Weed problems with the cities are treated as they are on private lands. We contact each City's Public Works Department when there is a problem on city property. Our results with this method are somewhat mixed. Some years they do a better job than others, but we have never been told they would not take care of Noxious Weed control.

With Johnsongrass and Field Bindweed, their methods are usually mechanical as they have a reluctance to use chemicals within the city limits. Because these two noxious weeds are relatively common within the city limits, we have never made an issue of these control methods.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

The purpose of the Noxious Weed Law is to assist landowners in the control of noxious weeds which have a negative impact on agricultural land.

Our primary goal is to provide the information necessary for landowners to recognize and control noxious weeds on their property. Our secondary goal is to assist them with the materials and equipment necessary to practice the control of these weed problems. Our third goal is to assist landowners in protecting their property from being contaminated by adjacent landowner's noxious weed problems.

Franklin County accomplishes these goals somewhat differently for each noxious weed. Franklin County provides rental equipment for use on noxious weeds within the County. (see appendix for a list of equipment.)

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL ON RAILWAYS

There are two railroad operations in the County. The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific, which contract their noxious weed control to private contractors. We routinely check them to make sure that the noxious weeds are treated.

MUSK THISTLE ON PRIVATE LANDS

Musk Thistle is the primary noxious weed problem in Franklin County. There are approximately 4,000 landowners outside of the city limits. Due to an increase in people moving into the country, we are adding scores of people with small acreage every year.

In March of each year, we publish a general notice to control all noxious weeds in the Ottawa Herald.

There are landowners that did an inadequate job on Musk Thistle treated during the previous year. We follow a process of using a series of form letters for contacting landowners about their musk thistle problem (see flowchart in the appendix).

Our bottom line is that some significant effort must be made if the landowner is to avoid legal notice.

We inspect property as we treat the roadsides and on days when we are unable to spray. We address Musk Thistle complaints only after inspections by the county. The names of those who report the Musk Thistle problems are never given out.

By the time we have gotten to the warning notice stage (see letter D), we have begun to set required treatment dates. These areas are checked on the due date, or as close as we can get to that date, because of weekends or holidays.

Under special conditions we allow for an extension of time, but the legal notice gives 7 days to complete the treatment. After the due date has passed, we re-inspect the property. If some treatment has been done, we will allow more time to finish. If no treatment has taken place, we will mow the area, spray, or both and bill the landowner for the service that was completed.

We sometimes notice Musk Thistle only after it has started blooming. If we have worked with the landowners before, we send the appropriate letter. If we have never had contact with the landowner, we send a "letter B", which notifies them of the requirements of the law. We never enforce legal notice on someone with whom we have only had a recent contact.

FIELD BINDWEED AND JOHNSONGRASS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

These noxious weeds on private lands are handled in the same manner as Musk Thistle. We start by sending the appropriate control letter with a completion date. We issue a Warning Notice and a Legal Notice, when necessary.

SERICA LESPEDEZA ON PRIVATE LANDS

Sericea Lespedeza has been a county problem since 1995. The southwest corner of the county is heavily infested and needs constant attention. Treatment of Sericea Lespedeza is handled the same as any other noxious weed in the county. After an inspection of the property, a control letter is issued to the landowner with a ten-day follow-up date. After reinspection, if nothing has been treated, we would move to a Warning Notice and then to a Legal Notice, if nothing has been treated in those time frames. If no actions have been taken to eradicate the problem, we then have the right to have the land sprayed, at the landowners expense.

COMMON TEASEL AND CUT-LEAF TEASEL

We handle Teasel in the same manner as Musk Thistle. We treat early in the spring and continue into June. We will then concentrate on a fall spraying program.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

The Noxious Weed Department does a moderate amount of vegetation management within the County. We will apply a three way mix of HighNoon (40 oz per acre), Piper Ez (20 oz per acre), Spike ADF (2 lb per acre), and 1% MSO to achieve bare ground weed control.

The treatments are done mid to late April of each year. We treat the County yard, Recycling Center lot, gravel shoulders along chip and sealed roads, Sheriff Department's shooting range and Impound Lot, Transfer Station and County tower sites.

Franklin County treats brush on the right-of-ways on a limited basis from mid-April through June 20th. A mixture of Metsulfuron Methyl (Escort XP) and Aminopyralid (Milestone) or Triclopyr + Fluroxypyr (Pasturegard HL) is used on brush up to 10 feet in height in areas where brush treatment has been requested by Public Works or by the adjacent landowner. If time permits, we treat brush on the main roads in the same manner.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The weed department does a moderate amount of public relations work within the county. We give landowners the "benefit of a doubt" until they demonstrate that they are not attempting to meet their legal obligations. We have an extensive number of form letters which we use to make contacts with landowners (see appendix).

The County Commissioners and County Administrator will be informed about progress in the noxious weed department on a regular basis, particularly regarding legal notices. Major purchases and new programs are covered during these meetings with the result that we are generally given a wide latitude in which to operate.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

We have excellent facilities and equipment in Franklin County. We have 2 computers, a copier and other necessary office equipment to assist us in doing the paperwork necessary to run our program.

Our break-room area is used for doing the daily reports by our spray crews. Our shop is fully equipped and we have a storage barn for equipment, which helps keep the equipment in good shape.

We rebuild spray trucks annually. We replace hoses, as needed, and rebuild our pumps annually. Solenoid valves, handguns, etc. are serviced during the winter. Our sprayer motors are replaced every two to three years on average. Our trucks are serviced at factory recommendation and our spray equipment every 8 hours. Major overhauls are done during the winter on an as needed basis. One truck is replaced every 4 years. We expect each truck to last 12 years. Our five rental sprayers are reconditioned each winter. They are serviced April through September on a daily basis, by our employees, prior to the beginning of right-of-way work.

Our noxious weed shop meets all the local, state and federal safety requirements. The area is dyked to contain run-off waters. Safety equipment (ie: eye wash stations, fire extinguishers, etc) are checked weekly. Contaminated clothing is laundered at the Noxious Weed Department.

We have SDS Safety Policy information to educate our employees about potential dangers involved with their employment with the county. Documentation is kept of the training, as required by law.

Although these plans are subject to change, this control plan fairly represents our intentions for noxious weed control during 2026.

2026 FRANKLIN COUNTY CONTROL PLAN

SIGNATURE SHEET

Rob Olson
Noxious Weed Director
Franklin County Noxious Weed Department

Date

Rod Harris, Chairman
Franklin County Commission

Date

Colton M. Waymire, Commissioner
Franklin County Commission

Date

Sabrina Meador, Commissioner
Franklin County Commission

Date

Ianne Dickinson, Commissioner
Franklin County Commission

Date

Donald Stottlemire, Commissioner
Franklin County Commission

Date

APPENDIX

- 1- BUDGET PLANS FOR ALL EXPENDITURES
- 2- CHEMICALS FOR SALE
- 3- WORK PLAN CHART
- 4- OPERATIONS PAPER WORK
- 5- NOTIFICATION LETTER
- 6- NO SPRAY ZONE CORRESPONDENCE LETTER
- 7- NO SPRAY PROGRAM FORMS AND TYPICAL MAP
- 8- STATE INSPECTIONS EXPLANATION