

Livestock and Natural Resources

Sericea Lespedeza is a noxious weed in Kansas. Besides being obnoxious and stubborn and the most dreaded weed, it is very costly to try and control. At one time it was planted in the south for forage, I guess because nothing else would grow there. The problem here is, it won't quit growing and spreading. The plant produces tannins that give animals a bitter taste and can bind up protein, goats don't seem to mind the tannins and will consume the plants.

Not long ago, I was doing some companion grazing with goats, to try and control Lespedeza. I was training the goats to the shock collars to keep them within a specific area. That project is in the books now, coming up we will have a first-hand look at how goats attack this weed.

On August 6th at 6:30 pm. We will be hosting a pasture field day at Bob and Henrietta Area's pasture, 17221 R4 Road, Mayetta Kansas. They have contracted with Barnyard Weed Warriors, a rent-a-goat grazing operation located in Longton Kansas. Mary Powell the owner/operator will be conducting the biological control of Sericea Lespedeza with 70-80 head of goats for one week.

We will observe the grazing, discuss the process and talk about Sericea Lespedeza control. Anyone is welcome to attend. There is a \$5 registration fee, collected that evening. If there is threatening weather that evening, please call ahead. If you would like more information, please contact me at 785-364-4125 or email jholthau@ksu.edu.

Sericea lespedeza was first planted in the United States in 1896 by the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station. Little study or use of sericea lespedeza was done until 1924 when the USDA secured seed from Japan and planted it at the Arlington Experiment Farm in Virginia. Its perceived value at the time for erosion control, hay, wildlife cover and food, and seed production was generally accepted. Sericea was first used as a protective cover for sites with poor soils. It was not widely used for pasture until the late 1940s. Sericea lespedeza is adapted to climatic conditions extending from Florida to Texas, north to Nebraska, and east to the Atlantic Coast, through the states of Michigan and New York. It grows best where annual precipitation is 30 inches or more and has survived winter temperatures of -17degrees Fahrenheit.