MDA finds Palmer Amaranth in feed screenings

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has found a new route for the invasive weed Palmer amaranth to enter and spread through Minnesota: grain and seed screenings used as feed.

After an investigation into a Palmer amaranth find in Redwood County, the MDA determined the weed found its way into a soybean field through cattle manure. The cattle had been fed screenings from contaminated sunflower seed.

The MDA has since sampled screenings throughout the state and has found Palmer amaranth seed in

numerous screenings – some containing as much as 250 Palmer amaranth seeds per pound of screenings.

"This newly discovered path for Palmer amaranth shows the difficultly in stopping the spread of invasive weeds," said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen, "However, the MDA is committed to continuing our monitoring of screenings, educating crop and livestock farmers about this development, and helping eradicate any new finds."

Palmer amaranth was first discovered in Minnesota in 2016. Since then, it has been found in six counties in the state. However, because of

eradication efforts at confirmed sites and a strong partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension, no Palmer amaranth has been found in subsequent growing seasons.

Palmer amaranth can grow 2 to 3 inches a day, typically reaching 6 to 8 feet, or more, in height. Left uncontrolled, a single female Palmer amaranth plant typically produces 100,000 to 500,000 seeds. It is resistant to multiple herbicides, can cause substantial yield losses, and greatly increase weed management costs in

soybeans and corn.

The MDA is encouraging farmers, especially those that have manure from feedlots spread on their land, to look for Palmer amaranth and report suspect plants. Follow these steps:

• Take pictures of the plant including close-ups of the stem and in-

florescence.

• Provide pictures and contact info to the MDA through the Arrest the Pest line at 1-888-545-6684 or arrest.the.pest@state.mn.us

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