

**Sericea Lespedeza, a Kansas Noxious
Weed and threat to the Flint Hills**

Sericea lespedeza was originally introduced into the United States for use as livestock forage and as an erosion control plant. While sericea remains an important forage crop in the southeastern U.S., it has become a serious invasive threat in the tallgrass prairie region.

Sericea lespedeza is a state-listed noxious weed. Under Kansas Noxious Weed Law, landowners are required to control sericea lespedeza. However, control has proven challenging as the plant continues to spread at an alarming rate across eastern Kansas, especially in native pastures.

Research with innovative approaches to control is urgently needed before sericea irreparably alters the ecology and economic viability of the Flint Hills.

The Tallgrass Legacy Alliance has formed a partnership with Kansas State University to fund research that evaluates ecologically compatible methods of control.

We need your help to contribute to the TLA Research Fund to help find ways to control this unwanted pest.

"Sericea lespedeza is one of the most serious threats to the integrity of the Flint Hills."

Brian Obermeyer, The Nature Conservancy



The mission of the Tallgrass Legacy Alliance is to conserve and enhance the biological, economic, and cultural well-being of the tallgrass prairie through a coalition of ranchers, agricultural and environmental organizations, and public agencies.

Sericea Lespedeza Research Initiative



TLA considers sericea lespedeza the most pressing threat to the agricultural and ecological viability of the Flint Hills.

Tallgrass Legacy Alliance

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**Sericea Lespedeza
Research Initiative**

integrated, ecological approach



The Tallgrass Legacy Alliance (TLA) has entered into an agreement with Kansas State University to provide financial assistance for invasive species research, with special emphasis on sericea lespedeza.

The Tallgrass Legacy Alliance was organized in 1999 by a coalition of ranchers, ag and conservation organizations, and public agencies to conserve the biological, economic and cultural integrity of the Flint Hills.

Sericea Lespedeza

threat to the Tallgrass Prairie

The ecological integrity of the tallgrass prairie is in jeopardy from an invasive plant called sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*). Sericea is well adapted to tallgrass prairie, and if left unabated, a considerable loss of biodiversity may occur.

Unless fed as cured hay, sericea's high tannin content renders the plant indigestible for most ruminants. As a result cattle eat very little of it, giving sericea a competitive advantage in native prairie.

Sericea lespedeza is considered one of the most serious of the invasive threats to the tallgrass prairie. It is critical that more research is done to prevent this plant from bankrupting ranchers, landowners and the biodiversity of the prairie.



Belly deep but nothin' to eat

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Over the next three years, a goal of \$100,000 has been pledged to fund critical research. TLA is determined to help raise these funds, but we need **your** help because current control methods for sericea are inadequate.

Donation Pledge

Yes, I want to contribute to **TLA Research Fund**

- ☐ \$100
- ☐ \$500
- ☐ \$1,000
- ☐ \$ _____



Suggested donation for landowners is \$1.00 per acre over the 3 year pledge period (____ acres x \$1.00 = \$ _____).

Please select preferred fund manager:

☐

KSU Foundation

☐

**Tallgrass
Legacy
Alliance**

Pledge forms are also found on the TLA web site: www.tallgrasslegacy.org

Please make check out to:

TLA Research Fund
c/o Tallgrass Legacy Alliance
PO Box 26
Americus, Kansas 66835

TLA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are normally tax deductible.

Current method of control

When used at proper rates, herbicides can provide effective control. However, seedlings are a problem, requiring repeat applications that are expensive and time consuming. And if not applied with care, these herbicides can harm non-target, beneficial broadleaf plants. Spot spraying is currently the most cost effective method of control, but many feel they're losing ground and are becoming frustrated. It is feared this frustration as well as application costs could result in landowners giving up or being motivated to consider other uses of their land.



Threat abatement

The TLA endorses an integrated management approach to address the threat of sericea, an approach emphasizing management rather than eradication. Specifically, TLA is investigating a multifaceted approach of different management strategies to control sericea and other invasives, **but we need more research because current methods are inadequate.**