**After three decades, invasive tansy ragwort once again threatening Oregon**

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CORVALLIS, Ore. – The near-eradication three decades ago of tansy ragwort, one of Oregon’s most problematic invasive species, was considered a crowning achievement because of innovative biological control methods.

But this year, [tansy ragwort](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/sites/default/files/documents/tragwortupdate2011.pdf) has flourished throughout western Oregon through a combination of weather conditions and a “down cycle” for the three insects used to control this toxic weed, continuing a disturbing recovery trend that began six years ago. Suddenly, a new generation of Oregonians, including numerous owners of small farms, ranches and other acreage, are being forced to deal with tansy before it kills their cattle or horses.

“The same weather conditions that promote the growth of tansy also have limited the number of beneficial insects used to control the weed,” said Hulting, a faculty member in OSU’s [Department of Crop and Soil Science](http://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/).  “The insects are in a down cycle and they may take a few years to recover.”

[Tansy](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/profile_tansyragwort.shtml) ragwort, a member of the sunflower family, was introduced into Oregon in the early 1920s and within three decades became a major problem. It contains toxins that killed thousands of livestock animals – mostly cattle and horses – and contaminated pastures and hay, according to Eric Coombs, a biological control entomologist with the Oregon Department of Agriculture. By the 1970s, Coombs said, many western Oregon pastures, hillsides and logged areas were heavily infested with the plant.

Aurora Villarroel, an Extension veterinarian with the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine, said Oregon already has experienced cases of cattle this year that have been stricken with toxicity from ingesting tansy ragwort. “Tansy can kill horses and cattle, and it can trigger abortions in pregnant animals,” she said. “That happened in a case earlier this year in the Willamette Valley.”

Beginning in 1960, the [Oregon Department of Agriculture](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/) introduced three insects that feed on the toxic weed – the cinnabar moth, the tansy ragwort flea beetle and a seed head fly – all imported from tansy’s homeland in Western Europe. Over the next dozen years, ODA distributed the insects throughout the state, focusing on the most heavily infested areas.

The tansy ragwort flea beetle lays eggs on or near the plants and larvae burrow into and feed on the roots, killing or injuring the weed. Cinnabar moths also deposit eggs on tansy, and when their offspring reach the caterpillar stage, they can defoliate the plants. The ragwort seed fly is less effective, but still aids in tansy control when their larvae feed on seed heads.

Directions: Answer the following questions in **COMPLETE SENTENCES.**

**Expert Group Analysis**

1. What negative effects does tansy ragwort have on native species?
2. What biological control methods were used to control tansy ragweed?
3. Why is the population of tansy ragweed on the rise?

4) What do you think would be the best method to control the tansy ragweed? Why?

Jigsaw Group Notes

Notes on Cane Toad:

Notes on Tansy Ragwort:

Discussion Questions:

1) Which invasive species do you think was the most harmful why?

1. How do you think we could increase public awareness of invasive species?