

INVASIVE PLANTS:

A Perspective from Sunnyside Farm

About the Farm

- Owned and operated by Krista and Jason Roske
- 86 acres located just outside Whitehorse in the Ibx Valley
- A start up farm with a market garden, chickens, turkeys, horses and 55 acres of pasture under development.
- Surrounded by forest on three sides



Practices that have created invasive plant challenges while starting our farm

- Clearing the land
- Multi year process to clear and prepare land for planting
- Rented equipment and contractors
- Purchasing hay from a number of farms
- Purchased soil, peat, etc.
- Wildlife movement has increased



Grass is always greener.....



Invasive weeds we have encountered

- Narrow-leaved Hawksbeard
- Perennial Sow Thistle
- Tall Hawkweed
- Chickweed
- Sweet clover



Our approach to dealing with invasive plants

- Business model greatly influences our weed and invasive plant mitigation choices
 - Choice to farm without herbicides, pesticides and synthetic inputs
- Buy local inputs whenever possible and avoid mixes with invasive species in them
- Plant a mixture of perennial forage crops that establish quickly for pastures
- Balancing the need to “find something that will grow” with the need to not willingly plant invasive species
 - To a point..... We include smooth brome in our pasture mixes
- Zero tolerance for foxtail – vet visits are expensive!
- Zero tolerance for anything yellow that isn't a dandelion....

Getting something to grow....



Weed Mitigation

- We have established a “line in the gravel” with our neighbor and both agree to remove any invasive plants we find past that point on our shared roadway
- We note locations of invasive plants on our property
- Actively pull all weeds on the “watch list” as we find them
- We “walk our fields” and remove infestations as we find them
- Plants are placed in plastic bags and taken to the landfill
- We do not compost these weeds or feed them to our animals
- we try to ask machinery operators to wash their machinery before they bring it to our property and have purchased a pressure washer for our own equipment
- Grow as much of our own forage as possible so we aren’t transporting new weeds onto our farm

Thank-you!

