



The Herb Specialists

April 13, 2011

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Ottawa, ON
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By email: wendy.asbil@inspection.gc.ca

Re: Invasive Plants Policy – Supplementary Submission

Dear Ms. Asbil,

Thank you for forwarding the Risk Management Documents for *Galega officinalis*, *Dioscorea polystachya*, and *Pueraria montana*. As I mentioned in the cover letter to our previous comments to the Invasive Plants Policy I did not have those three RMDs when I prepared our earlier comments. These supplementary comments are based on my subsequent review of those three documents.

I requested the three RMDs because my company has sold, or is selling, the three subject species. All three are medicinal or culinary herbs and as such are of interest to our customers.

1) *Galega officinalis*

We have sold seeds of this species in Canada and internationally since before 1997. We do not ship seeds to the U.S. as the species has long been declared a federal noxious weed in that country. It comes as a surprise to us that *Galega officinalis* is alleged in the RMD to be invasive in Canada. As we point out in our earlier comments there is a difference between a merely established species and one that is invasive, capable of causing harm to native species populations, agriculture, forests, or human health. A determination of invasiveness must be based on direct evidence of invasive behaviour and not on mere presence. If the Ottawa populations are in fact increasing and out of control then we are quite prepared to stop selling this species. The two reports of its presence in Canada cited in the RMD are unavailable to us (Darbyshire and Hanrahan 2000; Reddoch and Reddoch 2000) so we cannot therefore make our own assessment of invasiveness in Canada. We do, however, believe that if those surveys report mere presence and not invasive behaviour then the species ought not be declared invasive. The interests of those who value the plant for its medicinal use must be taken into consideration where there is no direct evidence of invasiveness in Canada. That this species has been in cultivation for over a decade in Canada underscores the need to weigh a plant's actual history of cultivation against a theoretical risk.

2) *Dioscorea polystachya*

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We have sold this species in Canada, the U.S., and internationally since before 1997 in both bulbil ("seed") and plant forms. It is an attractive pot and hanging basket plant, and as the RMD notes, it has culinary and medicinal value. Given that this species has been cultivated since before 1997 and that there is no evidence of invasive behaviour, in our hands or elsewhere, we do not believe that this species should be declared invasive in Canada.

3) *Pueraria montana*

We sold kudzu seeds since before 1997 until 2008. We sold seeds in Canada and internationally, but not to the U.S. We stopped selling seeds altogether in 2009. We continue to sell dried kudzu roots for use as a tea. Our decision not to sell seeds to the U.S. was voluntary based on many reports of invasive behaviour in the southern U.S. states. Our decision to stop sales in Canada was prompted by the recent discovery of a naturalized population on the shore of Lake Erie near Leamington. We do not believe that that population originated from our material because the ecotype we sold did not appear to survive in Canada; or if it did, it was not vigorous due to our northern climatic factors. We believe that the Leamington population is a different ecotype adapted to colder zones and was spread by natural means from the U.S. No doubt global warming has aided the expansion of this putative cold climate ecotype to this most southerly region of Ontario. Regardless of the origin of the Canadian population, we support a declaration of invasiveness for this species. We are, however, alarmed that the RMD recommends that dried plant parts be regulated along with live seeds and plants. Kudzu is an important Chinese medicinal herb and the right of access to the dried herb by Canadians must not be infringed on by the Invasive Plant Policy.

4) Dried botanicals must be exempted

To emphasize, we believe that the Invasive Plant Policy must not regulate dried botanicals intended for culinary, medicinal or other herbal use. The risk of escape of viable propagules from the dried botanical market is extremely low. This principle to protect the access to dried botanicals must be enshrined in the policy.

Once again, I thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Invasive Plant Policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conrad Richter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Conrad Richter
President