

Fertilizer additives - are they worth it

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It always seems that there is some product out there in the market place advertising itself as a fertilizer replacer or fertilizer enhancer. Two products we'll talk briefly about today are Avail and Agrotain. Avail is supposed to make phosphorus more readily available. Agrotain is a urease inhibitor that is supposed to reduce ammonia volatilization from nitrogen fertilizers. K-State is still looking at Avail and I'm anxious to see the results. North Carolina took an intense look at Avail in various soil phosphorus level environments. A multiyear study showed no consistent agronomic benefit from the Avail treatments. North Carolina is not Kansas but it would indicate that we should go slowly with any of these products. If you want to try some, try it on a limited basis and use your own check or test strips to compare with and without and treat everything else the same. Agrotain has shown significantly higher yields of brome grass in K-State studies. The biggest advantage is going to be in those scenarios where there is a risk for high volatilization loss such as damp soil, residue on the surface, warm temperatures and breezy. Under these conditions, Agrotain would increase yields about 700 pounds per acre. But that's more than enough to justify using Agrotain, especially at \$120/ton hay prices. But on the other hand, earlier season applications or simply getting a good rain fall soon after fertilization can do the same thing. Honestly, you need to think long about either one. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Early Season Insect Scouting

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's April and naturally the weather has been all over the board so far! March was below normal temperatures and that has helped slow down early season development of insect issues. This is good news as maybe we'll be able to have some normal development times and not have things way out of whack! A few aphids, and I emphasize a few, have been found in area wheat fields. They've all been bird cherry oat aphids which is what we'd expect early in the season. Surprisingly there were ladybugs already present even in late March. The numbers were low but enough to control the equally low numbers of aphids that were present. In general, spring treatment of aphids unless we have ridiculously high populations of aphids, which would be 30 to 50 per tiller. Both the bird cherry oat aphid and the greenbug can carry barley yellow dwarf virus but spraying in the spring just to try to control barley yellow dwarf has rarely been cost effective. And spring infection has traditionally not been nearly as devastating as fall infection. All in all our wheat is looking pretty good and the biggest damage factor right now has been fertilizer burn from topdressing. I was also in some alfalfa fields last week and was picking up the very start of alfalfa weevils. I could not find any live larvae, I was just picking up a little feeding damage, but they have started hatching and every warm day over 65 will just move them along a little bit more. It's too early to spray yet though so don't get an itchy trigger finger on the sprayer - we want to get far more eggs hatched before we start spraying! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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## SPCC Meeting Details

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Let's continue the discussion about the EPA's spill prevention, containment and countermeasures rule that goes into effect May 10<sup>th</sup>. As I mentioned last week, we do have a meeting scheduled for Thursday evening, April 18<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:30 p.m. That meeting will be held at Junction City Fire Station #2 which is located on the west end of Lacey Drive. Lacey Drive is where you turn off US77 to go to Sapp Brothers. Park on the street but don't block the driveway. If there's an emergency, the fire trucks need to be able to roll! Peter Tomlinson, Extension Agronomy environmental sciences specialist will be on hand to discuss the details of the rule and how to fill out the worksheet if you do need a plan. There had been some discussion that the ruling might be delayed, but an EPA official has informed that the rule has not been delayed. However, the continuing resolution that federal legislature passed the end of March did have wording that prevents EPA from prosecuting farmers for not having a plan in place until after October 1<sup>st</sup>. Don't put it off any longer. If you have over 1,320 gallons of storage, you need a plan. I recently talked to an EPA official working on this and he said that there will be a lot of latitude in how you deal with storage tanks. Tanks on either sides of a road will probably be considered separate facilities so they don't add up. BUT, keep in mind that even if you don't have to have a plan, you may want to have one in place because if a spill makes it into a waterway OR a complaint is filed, the EPA will have to investigate it. It's better to be prepared!

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