Ag Radio programs for August 26 - September 1, 2013

Planting Wheat for Grazing

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One possible cattle food source that I think is all too often overlooked around here is grazing wheat. Not only can it provide some good forage for cattle of all types, I think it can provide an outlet for those folks who like to plant wheat early. Of course If you want to plant really early, then plant some winter triticale and you can do that any time now. But for grazing wheat and maybe I should say dual purpose wheat - grazing and grain - then you should plan to plant wheat from Sept 5 to Sept 20. NOTE that if you are only planting it for grain, I'd really like to see you holding off until October 1st minimum and better to push it back past the 5th towards the 10th, but you have to take into account how long it takes you to get your wheat planted. But getting back to grazing wheat, we like to plant a little more than we would for just grain production. You will lose some plants to being pulled up and overall production per plant may be less. So increase seeding rates a quarter to a third. Make sure to get a little more starter fertilizer down to pop that seed up and get it growing quickly. I think we have some newer varieties with good Hessian fly resistance that should be utilized for early planting. Good wheat varieties to consider for grazing include Duster, Gallagher, Iba, Post Rock, Sy Southwind, Garrison, Jackpot and Ruby Lee. Plant these as early as conditions allow, remember to get nearby volunteer destroyed two weeks prior to planting and then get plants well rooted before grazing.This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Scouting for caterpillars in sorghum and soybeans

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The corn earworm is an amazingly adaptable pest. It can not only survive on corn, but it will also successfully infest sorghum, soybeans, cotton, even tomatoes and if wheat was growing at this time, I'm sure it'd go after wheat as well! It's first choice for food will usually be corn but as corn moves beyond roasting ear stage the next generation of earworm moths will readily move to sorghum and soybeans which would then behoove producers to be scouting these crops at this time. Sorghum is going to be most susceptible from flowering to soft dough, so we have a lot of fields in this stage right now. You can just start walking through the field and inspecting each sorghum head. The general rule of thumb is that an average of 1 caterpillar per sorghum head will cut yields by 5%. And this holds for any of the caterpillars in sorghum heads. If you are finding an average of 1 larvae per head and they are still small, under about ½ inch each, then treatment is likely justified. If they are big, you are probably too late and treatment won't gain you much, yield is already lost. In soybeans, corn earworm, or soybean podworm if you prefer, are most damaging when they feed directly on developing seeds within the pods. So start going down through a few rows of soybeans and look for feeding damage and small caterpillars. An average of one caterpillar per foot of row can justify spraying treatment. Do not mistake green cloverworm for corn earworm though. Green Cloverworms are a solid green, earworms are striped and can be pink to green to brown. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Crop maturity in cool cloudy weather.

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The weather has fortunately, from a crop production point of view, returned to more normal August conditions. But the results of the weather in late July and early August have caused a little concern for some of us. The cloudy weather coupled with cooler than normal conditions have caused issues for both corn and sorghum. We have seen quite a bit of tip dieback or pullback on corn that appears to be a result of low light levels. While this may be concerning we need to keep in mind that the tip of the ear is the lowest producing portion of the ear and yield loss may not be as bad as it looks. Sorghum is another story though. Sorghum is a tropical plant and it needs lots of sunshine and heat. I'm pleased that we have as many sorghum fields headed as we do and for the most part we should be okay. But those cool cloudy days have basically delayed the sorghum crop, in our part of the state, by about 2 weeks. While this sounds concerning, it's better than the 24 to 30 days that we are seeing in other parts of the state! The general rule of thumb is that if sorghum is blooming by August 24th it has a nearly 90% chance of making physiological maturity before the first frost. But push that back to blooming on August 29th, and you quickly drop into that 50 to 75% probability range. The sunshine and warmer temperatures have helped get things moving along a lot more quickly and we're still a little over 6 weeks until our average first frost date. So things are looking pretty good, will, unless we have that early frost thing that none of us really want to think about right now! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.