

Thinking About Planting Oats?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Call me an old softie, or call me someone who likes producers to utilize all the tools in the toolbox, but I honestly don't think enough folks give any consideration to planting oats in their rotation. Sure, oats may not be a sexy high dollar crop, BUT they can be a valuable part of any farm. Where I really think they work well is when you corn, sorghum or soybean stubble from last year that didn't get planted to wheat last fall but you'd really like to plant it to wheat this fall. Get an oats crop off of it first. Or if you have a field that you want to go to alfalfa this year, you may want to forego the spring planting, plant oats now and then follow up with an August planting into the oats stubble. Oats can be grown for grain, there are a lot of horses around ya know, or they can be grown for hay. But if you are going to grow oats you need to go all in. Plant a proper rate of 2 or 3 bushels per acre. Go on with a good amount of fertilizer early on, don't do this, "Well, we'll see if we get a stand first." thing. By the time you've decided that, you've missed yield opportunity. Plan to control weeds, again in a timely manner. If you are going to harvest them for hay, and they can make very good hay by the way, harvest at boot stage when you still have good protein quality. We do have good oats varieties and I can work up a fertility and weed control plan pretty quick for you. Sure, not many folks grow oats anymore, but to my way of thinking, that just opens up the opportunities for you!

This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Alfalfa Weevils will be here before we know it!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know you don't even want to think about it yet, but alfalfa weevils are just around the corner! I know that no one wants to think about it, heck the alfalfa hasn't even broken dormancy yet, but I want to get you thinking about it. The good news is that alfalfa weevils are quite predictable. We know that if you start counting growing degree days after January 1st, most fall laid eggs will hatch by the time you reach about 300 degree days, using a 48 degree base. We also know that a few eggs may hatch with as little as 25 degree days, but we recommend that scouting begins at about 180 degree days. So, the good news coming out of this winter is not that the cold weather killed eggs - that's not going to happen. But as of last Friday we were only at 40 degree days since the first of January. This time of year, even with some of the warm temperatures we've had on a few days, we're only accumulating 5 or 6 degree days per day. We could easily be looking at 3 to 4 weeks before we need to start scouting seriously for weevils. The other good news is that additional work over the past year has shown that there is no insecticide resistance showing up in alfalfa weevils. Sad to say but past failures to control come down to operator error if you will - usually insufficient amounts of carrier per acre and/or spraying when it was too cold. Spraying on cloudy days with temperatures in the 40s isn't going to be effective as the larvae are down low on the plant and they don't get up and in contact with the pesticide. As usual as we get on into spring I'll be scouting alfalfa fields regularly and reporting results. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

Thinking about aphids and BYD

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We recently had our annual agent update on crop insects and diseases. One disease that has caused me concern in recent years, other than wheat streak mosaic, is barley yellow dwarf or BYD. BYD is a virus that is transmitted by aphids. While the usual culprit in our area is Bird cherry oat aphids, it can be transmitted by over 50 aphid species. The aphid picks up the virus while feeding on an infected plant and then carries it to a new plant where the virus moves into the wheat plant while the aphid is feeding. Systemic seed treatment insecticides can kill aphids, within 30 days of germination, but the aphid has to feed on the plant first and if it feeds it can transmit the virus. The aphid may die, but the damage is done. We know that later plantings in the fall will have fewer insect issues so that's one way to deal with BYD. We can't really depend on genetic resistance with this one as there isn't really much out there! Here's where it gets interesting though - scientists have found that aphids not carrying the BYD virus for some reason are attracted to wheat plants that are infected with the virus. I don't know why, they just are. But, once the aphid has picked up the virus from an infected plant, it then tends to be attracted to plants that aren't infected. It's like the virus has set up a situation where the carrier will be attracted to a host plant if it doesn't have the virus, but once it does have the virus, it will be more attracted to the uninfected plant! It sounds like a scenario from a cheap science fiction movie, but it isn't science fiction, it's real! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.