

Ag Radio programs for February 23 - March 1, 2015

Alfalfa Fertilization and Herbicide

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's still a few weeks before spring officially gets here, but when it comes to alfalfa, we are just about out of dormant season. I was out on some alfalfa fields before these last few rounds of snow and plants were starting to show some signs of growth. Fortunately, we've had some cold weather since then slowing things done. But the dormant season in alfalfa is very crucial for the management of alfalfa as that's when you want to fertilize and apply weed control. If you have roundup ready alfalfa, then the dormant season herbicide is no big deal. But most of our alfalfa is still non Roundup Ready so we can do a lot of good with that dormant season application. There are several dormant season products including roundup (but be careful that there is NO green growth in conventional alfalfa). Metribuzin - we used to know it as Sencor - is one of my favorite dormant season products. It's very cost effective, it controls the winter mustards and does a fair job on the annual bromes. It will even do okay on some of the earlier emerging summer annual weeds. But, you've got a very narrow window left to treat. With fertilization we have a wider window but you need to get it done pretty soon so the plants have a chance to take up the nutrients. I really like an annual application of 20 to 30 pounds of phosphorus. Even if you think the alfalfa is doing okay, an annual application can help build up phosphorus levels and keep that stand healthy and productive for years to come! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Farm Bill Deadlines

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We are rapidly approaching the first deadline for the 2014 farm bill. The deadline for deciding whether you update yields OR to reallocate your base acres is February 27th. The good news is that if you haven't done anything yet and you would like to, call the FSA office and set an appointment. That appointment may not be until sometime in March, but because you were on the register with an appointment prior to February 27th, it's okay - you can still make those changes. If your appointment is in March, DO NOT MISS IT or you're stuck with old yields and bases. Of course, if you want to keep your old bases and your old yields, you don't need to do a thing except go in and enroll in which farm bill option you want, but technically you don't have to do anything to keep the old bases and yields. Now I'm going to get a little preachy. The FSA office is swamped. The folks working there are under a lot of pressure and there's a lot of people who need to get in and get signed up. Don't blame them for the complexity of this farm bill. It wasn't their idea! When you go in, be prepared! If you are updating your yields, have those yields figured out before you even go in. Don't go in with your crop insurance records and sit down and expect them to do it - you need to figure that out ahead of time. They know what your old base acres and reallocated base acres are, but have the yield forms filled out and ready to go. Everyone's under stress and wants to get through this, you and me included. Let's not make it any worse by being gripey and unprepared. Let's just do it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Is High Yielding Grain Sorghum in your Future?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If crops were to have personalities it could be very interesting. Wheat would sort of be like Andy Griffith. Everyone knows good old Andy and is comfortable around Andy. Corn and Soybeans are the attractive and popular crops right now. They'd be like Marilyn Monroe and Bridget Bardot. Grain Sorghum would be like Rodney Dangerfield - it never gets any respect. I've always said that I'm a softie for grain sorghum for a lot of reasons. Sure, many people hate it. It's itchy, it turns into shattercane, but it has some very endearing qualities. It's a plant that evolved under semi-arid conditions. It can handle drought better than corn. On limited water, it can get to a decent yield quicker than corn can. It only needs about 6 inches of moisture to get the first pound of seed out of sorghum, whereas corn needs over ten inches! In fact, you've got to get past 20 inches of moisture before corn moves past sorghum. In recent weeks I've been surprised by the number of folks commenting that they were going to be planting grain sorghum for the first time in many years this spring. So here's some things to be on the lookout for. Look for more studies and better information on planting rates. Most grain sorghum is planted way too thick. Look for some herbicide resistance in grain sorghum which can help with some tough weed issues. Commercial companies are receiving new parental lines that are capable of producing hybrids that will push that 200 bushel per acre plateau in grain sorghum. That's a couple years off, but don't give up on sorghum - stay tuned for further developments! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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