

Smoke Management

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We had a good start on burning last week. We had light wind conditions - one day even with an east wind to allow burning of those pastures on the west side of highways. Towards the end of the week we started to get some high fire danger index because of low humidity and warm conditions. But what I really noticed on several evenings was how much smoke was getting pushed down into the valleys and low lying areas. While the light winds made it easier to control fires, at times it was so light (something we can't say in Kansas very often) that we didn't get good mixing conditions to move smoke away and as sunset approached, cooling temperatures created inversion layers which pushed the smoke down. I want to remind all you fire managers out there that the Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan website and smoke dispersal is now active to help you evaluate how your smoke will act after you light the fire. I was looking at it last Thursday and it was showing how on Friday, all of our smoke would be heading straight to Wichita, which is what we want to avoid, but on Saturday it was not going to be headed to any metropolitan area. The web site is ksfire.org. Once there you can get a quick two day look at potential contribution of smoke from each county to causing problems. You can then go further into the website and look at other information. Also remember that the National Weather Service web page from Topeka has some excellent fire planning information also. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fertilization for Corn

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week we were talking about herbicide planning for corn fields and now I want to talk about fertilization for the corn crop. When we start talking about corn we are usually talking about the crop that we will apply the greatest amounts or pounds) of total fertilization. We sometimes get into trouble with our corn crop because we try to put all the fertilizer on preplant, sometimes months in advance. I really hate to see more than 50 or 60% go on in the cold soil season because there is just too many opportunities to lose it. This year I've had more questions than ever about putting on all of the fertilizer with the planter. Keep in mind that we are very limited with how much fertilizer we can put in direct seed contact. General rule of thumb is that if you put more than 10 to 15 pounds of N + K in direct seed contact you can have stand problems. Remember, many of these fertilizers are salts and too much salt in direct seed contact can kill germination. Phosphorus is not a salt so we have more leeway there. BUT, if you use a 2 x 2 placement, meaning 2 inches over and 2 inches down you can put on virtually all of your fertilizer, assuming it is in a liquid form. Some producers use a 3 x 2 placement just to be sure as sometimes if you are turning or following a terrace curve a 2 x 2 may place the fertilizer a little close to the seed. But using a good 2 x 2 placement you'd have no problem putting 150 pounds of nitrogen plus everything else you want to apply with the planter. It'll slow down planting, but you'll eliminate trips over the field and additional application charges! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Down to the wire on the Farm Bill

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Okay folks, there's just a couple of weeks left until this whole farm bill thing is wrapped up and we're locked in for the next several years. Well, just a couple of weeks left for us - I'm sure that the FSA folks will be working on it for months still! If you haven't figured out what you want to do, I can still squeeze in a few more one on one appointments to help you figure it out. I'll need all your paperwork, yields, base acres etc. If you have not even called and made an appointment yet, GET IT DONE NOW! They extended the yield update and base acre change deadline until March 31, but I don't really think that they are going to extend it again! I know that some of you are wanting to hold out until the last minute to get one more month of the marketing year average price. While I can understand why they want to do this, let's look at the reality here. The February price isn't going to really have much of an impact on the MYA because we just don't sell much of the crop during February. Quit procrastinating, make your decision and get signed up. I was in the FSA office late last week and they'd commented that things had slowed down so if you don't have an appointment yet, get it done and take advantage, because from here on out, it's going to be busier. On a closing note, I think we also need to keep this in perspective. There's probably no wrong decision as nobody knows what the prices and yields will be for the coming years. And if you look at the percent of your total income that these farm payments may make, it is far less than the actual crop production will be. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.