

Ag Radio programs for August 28 - September 3, 2017

Scouting update

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Myself and many other folks have been spending a lot of time scouting fields lately. In the past week to ten days sugar cane aphids have now moved across the border into Kansas and are now as close as Sedgwick County. I still have not found any in Geary County this year, well at least as of last Friday. Keep looking though. If you see shiny sticky leaves though, let me know ASAP, so we can monitor things. I'm still encouraged due to the number of beneficial insects that are around. Obviously with far more soybean acres than sorghum acres, I've been spending a lot of time in soybean fields as well. I've been finding just about everything in soybean fields, but so far they have been at levels well below treatment thresholds. Bean leaf beetles are out there. Treatment threshold for foliar feeding is 50 per foot of row. I was finding less than one per foot of row. This is one we really need to watch closely. I'm honestly not too worried about leaf feeding, but pod feeding is another story. If you are seeing about 1/3 of the pods with fresh feeding damage, we may need to treat. Thistle caterpillars are in every field but still well below thresholds. Continue to monitor for this pest for another 2 to 3 weeks. And green cloverworms are out there but still at low levels. I'm expecting the natural fungus disease to start taking their numbers out really soon which would preclude the need to treat. We are still watching for soybean aphids and stinkbugs but so far we haven't seen many of these yet. Remember that we need to hold off on spraying until we reach solid treatment thresholds! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Locust and Hedge tree control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Two of the woody species that I hear many complaints about in pastures are thorny locust, aka honeylocust and hedge, more correctly known as Osage orange. Here's the big problem with both of them. If you cut them down and then treat the freshly cut stump with the appropriate herbicide, you will do a good job of killing the main trunk. But a year or two down the road, all of a sudden you have root shoots coming up all over the place! Unfortunately, that's just the nature of these trees and black locust can be like this as well, we just don't seem to find as much of it. So here's a trick that seems to help with that root sprouting issue. Kill the tree first with a basal bark treatment. Wait for it to get good and dead then cut it down. The time to basal bark treat trees is mid July through mid January. A basal bark treatment requires mixing triclopyr in diesel fuel or kerosene - essentially one quart of triclopyr with 3 quarts of diesel fuel OR PastureGard HL, which is triclopyr plus fluroxypur, also as a 25% solution. Then spray this all the way around the trunk of the tree, the bottom 12 to 15 inches up from the ground. Soak this area to the point of just starting to runoff, then walk away and wait for it to die. For honeylocust or black locust you can also use Milestone as long as the trunks are less than 6 inches in diameter. This would be a good choice for when you have a lot of small stems coming up. Milestone is very active on legume plants, but won't do anything on hedge trees. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fertilizing Bromegrass in the fall

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I want to issue a challenge to bromegrass growers this fall. And that challenge is very simple - try fertilizing all of your bromegrass before January 1st. I'll even issue you a second challenge - pull a full profile soil test in those brome fields in the coming weeks and let's do a full check for phosphorus and nitrogen and sulfur. I've spent the past several years listening to producers bemoan poor bromegrass yields and I really think we are dealing with more than just low rainfall rates. I feel that we are getting the bromegrass fertilized too late and then we do hit a dry spell and that fertilizer is not getting into the root zone in time to do us any good. Oh the intention is good of getting it fertilized in February, but then things come up and all of a sudden it's March and we hit that early spring dry spell, and there ya go. If you get that fertilizer applied from mid November to mid December, we suddenly have a lot higher probability of having some kind of precipitation, and honestly a quarter inch of rain or a couple inches of snow will do it. We are far less likely to have conditions favoring volatilization at that time as well so losses are going to be less likely and far less. Those brome roots are still functioning in November and early December and they will take up some of that fertilizer at that time. The other part of the equation is that I feel that many of those brome fields are not getting the phosphorus or the sulfur that they really need. We get the nitrogen on, but that isn't the limiting factor. Then for fun, run the fertilizer spreader double over just a small area and see what happens as well! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Preplant N Fertilizer in Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Because we are planting wheat into warm soils in the fall, it precludes our applying all of the nitrogen that the wheat crop needs pre-plant. The economic risk of losing substantial nitrogen out of the root zone is too great, and the environmental risk is also a serious consideration. We are limited to how much nitrogen fertilizer we can put in with the wheat seed in direct seed contact as too high of levels can damage germination. Therefore, for our conditions and row spacings, you need to limit nitrogen (plus potassium if your fertilizer has any) to about 20 maybe 25 pounds per acre. Phosphorus is not a salt based fertilizer so there aren't the same concerns or limits there. But there are times, especially in no-till production, or when we want to be able to graze the wheat, where we can probably justify putting on 50 or so pounds ahead of planting. So how's the best way to do this? You could broadcast urea or UAN on the soil surface, but I think we all know that unless you can do it on a cool day and have a half inch rain immediately afterwards, you are looking at some volatilization losses. If you have the option of placing fertilizer in a separate band or location, as you can with an air seeder, then you can apply more with the drill. But ultimately you are likely looking at a subsurface application of nitrogen, most likely anhydrous ammonia. Even though this has a high degree of safety to the wheat crop, I still would not recommend applying the full nitrogen rate this way because you will lose some out of the root zone through mobilization of the nitrogen. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Making Your Own Flour

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Periodically I'm asked by folks about taking raw wheat (simply meaning wheat straight out of the combine or bin) and having it ground into flour or grinding it themselves. People are usually asking IF they can do it, and as long as it didn't come out of a bin that had been recently treated for stored grain insect pests with an insecticide, the answer is yes. HOWEVER, be aware that not all wheat is created equal. Every variety of wheat creates flour that has different, sometimes vastly different, milling and baking qualities. The same variety can even vary from year to year. When you buy the same brand of flour in the store, from season to season and year to year, it bakes up the same way thanks to the skillful blending of millers at the mill. Big commercial flour mills keep different wheat varieties separate and run very specific baking tests on them so they know how they'll act when used by the end consumer. So many things can go into affecting the milling and baking qualities that it's a constant challenge to the millers. Wheat growers in certain areas can even get some good premiums for growing certain wheats with certain desirable qualities. We don't have those markets around here so most wheat growers look solely at yield. And some of the better yielding wheat varieties, and commonly used, don't necessarily have the best milling and baking qualities. Now, I do have a bulletin at the office that discusses this and even names the more desirable wheat varieties for milling and baking and another on tortilla qualities of wheats. Let me know if you want a copy. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.