Ag Radio programs for July 24 - 30, 2017

Brome Planting Planning

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There is an old saying that you can plant bromegrass, or any of our other cool season grasses, in any month that has the letter R in it. While that's fairly accurate, I really believe that you've got the best chance to get a good stand of brome by planting in early September. Bromegrass is usually fairly fool proof but there are still a couple of ways to be sure to have a disaster. The one thing that you have to do before planting bromegrass is to pull a soil test to check pH and soil phosphorus levels. Being a perennial crop, if you plant into an acid soil, you are going to have problems getting a good stand established. Lime will need to be applied and incorporated if in fact you have an acid soil. Secondly we need to deal with phosphorus levels. If you have low soil phosphorus, the bromegrass will germinate and start to grow, but then just sit there. Apply phosphorus preplant as prescribed by the soil test but even if you gamble and go without a soil test, plan to apply 30 to 40 pounds of nitrogen and 20 to 40 pounds of phosphorus. It is highly unlikely that you will need potassium, but after the seedling year, I'd also include about 10 pounds of sulfur annually. As for planting dates, we can probably plant anytime from September 1 to about September 20th. If you miss that date, you can also do a winter seeding from Dec 1 to Feb 15th or a spring seeding up through April 1st. As to seeding rate, we generally feel that 10 to 15 pounds (err towards the higher level) of pure live seed is going to be best! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Deplete the seed bank

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Years ago I was at a national 4-H event in Washington and was visiting with a 4-Her from Utah. We were talking about how our family farms were similar and different. One thing that he mentioned that struck me was that they rarely used herbicides. His dad wasn't opposed to using herbicides but he also had a very strict policy that they never ever let any weed go to seed. Obviously in those days everything was still conventional tillage but he said after every cultivation and clear through the year they were always out walking fields pulling up or destroying weeds before they went to seed. They had been doing it this way for over 70 years. They were practicing the very basic concept of depleting the seed bank. Weeds are prolific seed producers. Some large pigweed plants can produce sevearl hundred thousand seeds. You let a few of those go to see after wheat harvest or any time, and you've just made one heck of a deposit in the seed bank. Because glyphosate worked so good for so long, we've forgotten that very basic concept of stopping seed production. When possible, try to stop those weeds by using a herbicide with a different mode of action than you will be using on the growing crop next year. A very basic tenant that I guess we need to learn. It even mean that you get that field cultivator out of the fence line and you use it to deal with some of those bigger weeds. Or maybe we go back to the time honored tradition of walking fields to get those missed weeds. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Who Fixes the Fence

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Kansas fence law is very specific, very vague and routinely mis-understood. Let me also say right up front that the long held tradition of property owners meeting at the middle of the fence and being responsible for the fence to their right, or left, is not supported by Kansas Statutes. What the statues say is that building and maintenance of the fence is to be done in equal shares. Whatever the total cost is, each property owner is responsible for one half. So just toss that old left hand right hand notion out the window. The reason is obvious - if half the fence is on the nice and level and the other half is up a rocky slope, we all know what the differences in costs will be. In the right hand/left hand scenario, someone gets the raw end of the deal. What isn't discussed in the fence law is whether it is up to the landlord or the tenant to pay for and maintain fences. Kansas statutes do state that the livestock owner is responsible for keeping livestock inside of a fence. There is no open range in Kansas. So if a landlord rents out a pasture as is, and expects the tenant to take care of everything, they'd better be ready to accept a much lower rental rate than average. Again, it comes down to communication. Each party needs to be clear. What I do like, especially for fence maintenance, is that the landlord provides materials, tenant provides the labor. I also feel that if substantial new fence construction is needed the landlord has a responsibility. If the tenant is willing to do the work, that's great, but otherwise, I feel it's the landowners duty. But of course, assume nothing, discuss it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dicamba Drift

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's probably no surprise to many of us that Arkansas and Missouri ordered cease sale and use orders for the herbicide dicamba earlier this month. The Missouri Soybean Association already estimates that over 200,000 acres of soybeans in Missouri are showing evidence of dicamba drift damage. We can spend hours discussing how this may have happened but ultimately it's going to come down to failure to read and follow label directions. Last year, before any of the dicamba herbicides were released for use on dicamba beans, there were drift issues in states south and east of us and even regulatory action taken against some producers. When I see these issues crop up I can only shake my head because the producers that cause the problems are the same ones who complain about regulatory action taking away products that we can use. As an industry we have a responsibility to be wise stewards of the tools that we are provided to work with. Perhaps it comes down to peer pressure that keeps the problem in check but we can't change anyone but ourselves. I know, those labels are always printed in really small print. But we HAVE to read and follow these label directions. We have to use the right product at the right rate at the right stage of crop and weed growth. We can't be adding things that aren't on the label. We can't be spraying too close to sensitive crops or farmsteads. Some of the worst cases of drift I've ever seen have been on the farmer's spouse's roses and tomatoes. Talk about a no win situation! Please read and follow the label directions! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Nitrates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I doubt that it's a surprise to anyone that the first forage sample that I sent in this summer for nitrate testing came back "hot". That's a technical term that we use when a sample is high in nitrates. In this case the forage was sorghum sudan and it came back at a little over 10,000 ppm nitrate. For reference, under 3,000 is generally safe for all livestock, 3 to 6,000 moderately safe in most situations, 6 to 9,000 is potentially toxic and over 9,000 is potentially fatal. Fortunately, the producer had not done anything with the forage - it was still standing. My advice was to just let it stand for the time being. If the field were to get an inch of rain or more and then we wait 7 to 10 days the levels would probably drop dramatically allowing for a forage harvest with much lower nitrate levels. If the forage was already cut we'd be stuck as nitrates don't go away unless the forage is ensiled. High nitrate hay can only be blended with lower nitrate level forages to get it down to a usable level. We also know that cattle, when fed increasingly higher levels of nitrate in forages can adjust to quite high nitrate levels. You need to do this with care and a close eye over a couple of weeks, but the bacteria in the rumen can adjust and change to those higher nitrate levels. We also know that the base of the plants usually have the highest nitrate levels so simply harvesting at least six inches high can leave a lot of the problems in the field. While this producer tested pre-harvest I'm also a firm believer in checking post harvest so you know for sure what you've got so you can avoid expensive surprises. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.