

Ag Radio programs for July 31 - August 6, 2017

Planning for Alfalfa Planting

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The best time to plant a new field of alfalfa is in the late summer, basically late August through mid September. Planting in the late summer, assuming that we have adequate soil moisture, allows us to get the new alfalfa plants up and growing and well enough established before winter dormancy sets in so that they can survive the winter and get growing in good season early next spring. The biggest risk to new alfalfa is not the cold weather, but rather that they not get well enough rooted down to avoid frost heaving pushing the crowns up above the soil surface where they will dry out. In recent years we've seen real good results from no-tilling into wheat stubble either from direct seeding into the standing stubble OR burning off the stubble and planting into the smoldering remains. This no till seeding does assume one thing though. That you don't need to add lime to raise the soil pH. Alfalfa does not like acid soil and I've seen far too many new seedings of alfalfa that just sit there the next spring without growing. When we take a soil test we invariably find that the pH is below the optimum level for alfalfa. Ironically, the stand right along the road is often doing just fine because limestone dust has come off the road and over time raised the soil pH into that ideal range. So, if you are planning to start a new stand of alfalfa this fall, the first thing you need to do is pull a soil test and bring it in to my office for analysis. Stay at least 25 feet away from any road so that you get a good true soil pH analysis. Doing this now gives you time to apply lime, and phosphorus if needed. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Controlling Volunteer Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It never ceases to amaze me how we can go through July and early August and seem to not get enough rain to do enough good for the crops, but yet it manages to be enough to get all that light weight wheat seed that blew through the combine germinated and growing. The problem with having volunteer wheat growing in the mid to late summer is that it can serve as a bridge for several insects and diseases to get them through the summer and into a new crop of wheat. This isn't just a problem of wheat curl mites and wheat streak mosaic, which can be a big problem even this far east, there's a whole host of other insect and disease problems that can over summer on volunteer wheat. Now the astute individual is going to point out usually, as the wheat dries down, there is not much, if any, volunteer wheat out there. They also know that the wheat curl mite can only live a few days without a green tissue host. The problem is that wheat curl mites can survive on many weedy grasses and even corn. They won't thrive, but they'll survive until they can get on to new wheat plants. If you have a wheat stubble field, and there are going to be any other wheat fields planted this fall within a mile of it, you need to do everyone a favor and get that volunteer destroyed no later than mid September. Grazing it won't do the job, but herbicides or tillage works great as long as the volunteer wheat is brown and dry by mid September. Be a good neighbor and control your volunteer wheat! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Will we have Sugarcane aphids this year?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The grain sorghum industry has survived many issues over the years. In the 1970s it was greenbugs. Periodically since forever we have dealt with chinch bugs. While some of the newer seed treatments have helped on chinch bugs we still see problems from them. What hurt grain sorghum more than anything else was improved genetics of soybeans and corn as well as changes in the farm program. The last couple of years, especially last year, sorghum got hammered by sugar cane aphids. Even in fields with multiple insecticide treatments, sorghum yields suffered severely last year. While much of this has been attributed to sugar cane aphid, there are many of us that believe that there was more at work here than just sugar cane aphids including chinch bugs and other usually minor insect pests. Sugar cane aphids do not overwinter in Kansas. They have to blow in from points south. Sugar cane aphids were being found in south Texas fairly early this growing season which was not the sort of thing we wanted to hear. As of about a week ago, sugarcane aphids had not been reported in Kansas. They were close in Oklahoma so by now they are probably present in south border counties. But Texas has also seen sugarcane aphid numbers stay rather flat and low so far this year. We aren't sure why, but that's okay. Early detection and treatment at proper treatment thresholds is crucial. I know I'm preaching to a small audience here, but IF you have sorghum planted, you need to start getting out there and scouting for aphids. If you need help, call me. If you need materials to study, call me! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Iron Chlorosis in Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was driving across Kansas a few weeks ago returning from national county agent association meetings in Utah. For starters I was seeing soybeans being grown much further west in Kansas than I can ever remember. I also saw a lot of soybean fields that had large yellow areas. Now many things can cause soybeans to be yellow including herbicide carryover and poor nodulation, but I think that in many of these fields, the problem was iron chlorosis. Now I don't care whether it's in people or in plants, iron deficiency is a tough thing to correct. One of the problems is that iron in the soil becomes less available as the soil pH goes up. At a pH of 6 or 6.5 iron is readily available. But as the pH moves alkaline, past about 7.5, iron becomes tied up in different chemical forms in the soil solution and is held tighter than plants can extract it. We see it with some tree species and we see it with some crops too, especially soybeans. In soybeans we also have some confounding issues. There are differences across varieties. The presence of soybean cyst nematode can make it worse as can high soil nitrate levels. At this time of year it can be difficult to correct iron deficiency, but it is important to take note of it for future crop years. We have seen some good results by using chelated iron fertilizer as a seed coating at planting time. The amount of iron needed to correct a problem can be amazingly low. If you have areas of fields that are yellow, bright yellow and not growing as well as other parts of the field, give me a call so we can do some testing and find out what's going on! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Controlling brush in brome waterways

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was at the fair last week and got into a good discussion with a local producer regarding brush control in brome waterways. Brome waterways present some special challenges for brush control. For starters, bromegrass, as a cool season grass, is more likely to show leaf burn from some brush herbicides. The grass will grow out of it, but it can be disconcerting post treatment. Secondly, since many waterways are hayed, these plants may be getting clipped off year after year. They are swathed off in June and then have all summer to grow back. Every time they are cut off and grow back, the root system gets a little bigger. You may wind up with a small tree that is only a foot tall but has a 20 year old root system under it. We are also swathing these fields at about the same time that we would normally be treating woody species so now we have to come back in during early August and try to do some control. Fortunately, while early August is well past the normal treatment time frame, regrowth on these woody plants results in younger leaves that are more likely to take up the herbicide. In fact with tough to control species like locust and hedge, treatments can be made clear into early September as long as the leaves are healthy looking and green. I would consider going with some of the heavier hitters for brush control like Chaparral plus 2,4-D, Chaparral plus triclopyr, Forefront plus triclopyr or even Grazon P+D with Triclopyr. You can expect some discoloration of the bromegrass after treatment but that's okay. Control is better when a hand gun is used. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.