

Ag Radio programs for September 4 - 10, 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. I spent a lot of time last week in crop fields, mainly soybean fields. As of Friday afternoon here is what I was finding. Cloverworm numbers were showing growing evidence of being controlled by the natural fungus that shows up late in the season. I was finding a lot of mummified corpses and many others that were obviously sick because they just weren't acting normal. Thistle caterpillar numbers were up from early week to late week. While some fields were approaching treatment levels, you couldn't justify spraying for them alone. The average size was noticeably increasing so they are likely starting to run their course. As of Friday I had yet to see a single soybean aphid. Bean leaf beetles were still present but at low levels still. I think most of the leaf feeding was actually due to the caterpillars. I was picking up an increasing amount of pod feeding but still fairly low. I was also seeing an occasional soybean podworm, a.k.a. corn earworm and they may be partly responsible for the pod feeding. What was noticeably increasing through last week were stink bugs however. I was finding lots of fairly young stink bugs and a disconcerting number of egg masses which will be hatching this week if they didn't over the weekend. 10 stink bugs per 30 feet of row can justify a treatment. Some fields were clearly at this level by Friday and many more soon will be. I would encourage you to get out in your fields and look for small black and white insects feeding on upper pods or honeycomb looking egg masses on the leaves. If you need me to come out, call me! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

How late can I plant...

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know we've got some folks around the county that are wanting to plant some alfalfa and bromegrass both this fall. Alfalfa we normally plant mid August through mid September. Bromegrass we usually plant in September or October, sometimes interseeding it with a wheat crop which often serves as an excellent nurse crop. In some cases I know there is enough moisture to get those two crops up and growing, but in other cases we may be dusting that seed in which then raises the question, do we plant and pray or hold off until we see if it is going to rain. And if we do hold off, how long can we wait? Alfalfa is going to be the most sensitive to late planting. If you are dusting it in during the preferred time frame and it doesn't come up until October 15th what difference does it make if you planted it September 5 or September 25? The risk with both alfalfa and brome is not that the crop will freeze out. Both plants have very good cold tolerance even as a young plant. The bigger risk is that the plant will not be well enough rooted such that if we have a lot of freeze thaw cycles during the late fall, winter and early spring, that freezing and thawing action will push the plant, specifically that so important crown, up above ground level. Crowns of these plants are supposed to stay below the soil surface so the soil prevents the crown from drying out. If the crown dries out, it will die. And cold freezing air dries things out quickly. Watch the calendar and the soil moisture. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Breaking the green bridge

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. You've probably been hearing quite a bit from myself and others in the ag media about wheat streak mosaic and the importance of breaking the green bridge. But there also seems to be a lot of confusion about the two weeks and when the two weeks needs to be, etc. Wheat curl mites need green growing material to live on. They can launch themselves into the wind and travel several hundred yards which is why a planted wheat field next to a field full of volunteer is so much of an issue. The longer the volunteer is green the bigger the population of mites that can develop in it. If it's been green for all of August and September, you can be pretty sure that it is loaded with mites. Now the mites can live on other grassy plants, including corn, but they just can't develop large populations like they do in wheat. When you destroy your volunteer wheat either by herbicide or tillage, and it has been dead or turned under for a couple of weeks, all the mites that were on that wheat are dead. As new volunteer wheat emerges, it can get infected from other sources downwind. But this is a slow process of reinfesting the wheat with the mites and then getting enough of a population built up to be a threat to nearby planted wheat fields. So basically any two week green free period from late August on into the fall is going to do a pretty good job of breaking that bridge. Take advantage of any opportunity to spray or till up that volunteer wheat in the next couple of weeks. Elimination of the source of infection is the best way to control any disease or insect problem!

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Are Seed Treatments Worth It?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I rather imagine that in less than 3 weeks we will have some wheat in the ground. It may be for grazing or it may just be to get it going before you get too busy with harvest. I do have to add that I feel the BEST time to plant wheat for grain production, not counting dual purpose grazing and grain, but just grain, is October 10 through 20. From an agronomic perspective there are just a lot of reasons to be planting your wheat in that window. But the question I often get is whether seed treatments are worth it. I feel that given what wheat seed treatments do they need to be used every single year. From the fungicide perspective they protect against all those smuts and bunts. Remember the stinking bunt issue from a couple of years ago? Wouldn't have happened if the seed wheat had been treated. While early planted wheat often doesn't have an issue with seedling diseases because of the warm growing conditions, later planted wheat, especially after beans, can be at risk. Just take care of all of those problems and use a good fungicidal seed treatment. What it's harder to consistently prove benefit from is the insecticidal side of the seed treatment. The insecticide is going to protect against insect pests for about 4 weeks. Whether that's long enough to do any benefit against hessian fly or the aphids that carry barley yellow dwarf is still being discussed and researched. I can't tell you that you certainly should or shouldn't use an insecticidal seed treatment every year. I know what I would do, and you can call me and ask me, but you've got to decide for you! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Seeding depth crucial for wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I sense that we are going to see more wheat go in the ground this fall than we did last fall. I have absolutely nothing to prove that with other than I know how many people worked around their rotations and how many of them are going to need to get some wheat back in there. Very little wheat is planted in conventional or clean tilled fields anymore. Most is going into no till and that raises some real challenges. As a grass plant wheat has a crown that is at the base of the plant. This crown, is going to develop just below the soil surface, or at least try to. The plant needs to have room between the seed and the crown and the crown and the soil surface for proper root development. The first roots come right out of the seed and these are often called seminal roots. But up at the crown is where the wheat plant develops what I like to call crown or secondary roots, but are more properly nodal roots. These are the ones that are going to give you the real root mass that you need for proper plant growth, development and grain production. If, due to residue, hard soil, insufficient down pressure on the drill, whatever, the seed winds up not getting place 1 to 1.5 inches into the soil, you have a seed that is germinating on the soil surface, there's insufficient room for crown roots to develop, the plant is stunted and will never develop very much, if any grain. We often see this in the spring where areas just aren't growing and everyone thinks it's a disease, but really it's poor seed placement. The moral of this story is to get your drill will set up to get down through all that residue. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.