

Wheat Issues

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The good news is that we made it through that cold snap back around the 15th without any freeze damage on the wheat crop. But then the temperatures shot up into the 70s, the wheat started growing like crazy and the limited soil moisture issues quickly became apparent. The 2014 wheat crop is deteriorating quickly. Even with normal rain and temperatures during the month of May, yield has been hurt. If there's a silver lining to all of this it's that disease pressure is still very low. Already, early last week, with wheat plants only 6 to 8 inches tall, the first tips of the flag leaf were showing up in the earliest tillers in many fields. This year's wheat crop is going to be short, short in stature and short in yield. The leaves are shorter and smaller. I think the old timers would have called this year's crop a jack rabbit crop. You can watch a jackrabbit running down between the rows with no problems. This is going to result in some weed control challenges. We usually depend on the crop canopy to shade the soil. Once the soil is shaded, many weed seeds won't germinate and grow. Without a closed canopy you'll have more sunlight getting down to the soil and more weeds will be sprouting and growing which could mean we have a real weedy harvest. It may also mean that chinch bugs will be moving out of wheat into surrounding crops more readily so make sure you're using a systemic insecticide seed treatment to protect those seedling sorghum plants! It's getting interesting! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Recommended soybean planting dates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. While many producers are still trying to finish getting their corn planted, I'm going to start pushing the season on soybean planting. In general, I feel that most producers plant their soybeans too late. I also feel this way about grain sorghum but that's for another day. Most producers generally start planting around Memorial Day, the end of May, and try to be done ahead by mid June. I tend to disagree with this and feel that we should start planting towards the end of the first week of May, May 10th at the latest. Certainly we need to take into account soil temperature and the 7 to 10 day forecast, but if the soil temperature is up to 55 degrees, start planting! Since 1999 there have been several studies done in eastern to central Kansas looking at differences in yield from an early May planting to a mid to late May, an early to mid June and a mid to late June planting. There were seven studies done, many over 2 or more years and in general, the earlier planting generally had higher yields ESPECIALLY when a fungicidal seed treatment was used. Often times this difference was to the tune of 10 to 20 bushels per acre! That kind of yield differential will certainly pay for a seed treatment in a hurry. So get your soybean seed treated and get it in the field earlier! A few years ago we were suggesting only using a fungicide seed treatment in no till fields or early planted conventional till, but anymore I just think we should be using a fungicide seed treatment every year. What about an insecticide seed treatment? Occasionally we can see a difference, but so far it hasn't been consistent. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Alfalfa Weevils still active

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been in a lot of alfalfa fields lately and we are still seeing a lot of weevil activity in untreated field. And I've also been seeing way too much white in some alfalfa fields as well. Keep in mind that early cutting isn't really an option as the darn rascals wind up concentrating under the windrow. When that happens we get adults emerging under that windrow and they end up keeping the regrowth chewed down causing that striped look we all too often see. But I've yet to see a field close enough to cutting to even consider an early cut yet. So treatment is in order. What I've also been noticing is that while there's a fair number of big weevil larvae, there's also been a pretty good population of small weevil larvae with a lot of feeding yet to do! Again, you're going to have to spray those fields. It would appear that we had a pretty active spring egg laying season. Which means that we can expect activity for another 10 days or so. The good news is that I think with that run of warm weather we had following the April 15th freeze we are getting most of the weevil hatched in a pretty tight time frame. Oh, and speaking of that freeze, if you were thinking it would kill the weevil larvae - forget it! Surveys done a day or two after that cold snap showed that they were alive and well and doing just fine. Remember, spray only when it's above 50 for three days, use 15 to 20 gallons of carrier and go with the full rate of insecticide. Also remember to check the post application harvest waiting interval. We should still be in good shape but don't want anyone to get caught! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.