

Check on Volunteer Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Now that wheat harvest is getting further and further back in the rear view mirror, it's time to get serious about volunteer wheat control. Yes, I know, I say that every year but I still see a lot of volunteer wheat every year and I see a lot of issues from it every year. To be sure, volunteer wheat needs to be dead 2 to 3 weeks prior to wheat planting in adjacent fields. That's 2 to 3 weeks prior to planting, not prior to emergence. That nice young tender green volunteer wheat is a wonderful way for insects and diseases to stick around through the summer and be there ready to infest or infect new wheat plants in October. Taking a western Kansas approach, the volunteer wheat can also suck up and waste a lot of soil moisture that isn't stockpiled for the next crop, or the double crop you may have planted into. In double crop beans, if you have a heavy stand of volunteer, you may want to go with more than just glyphosate - you may want to add some Poast to boost the volunteer wheat control. I know many producers have a don't worry attitude about volunteer wheat as they think the only problem is wheat streak and everyone knows wheat streak is a western Kansas problem. Well, that is wrong as I see yield loss every single year, in Geary county, from wheat streak. But volunteer wheat can also serve as a green bridge for Hessian Fly and aphids of several species as well as leaf and stem rust, take-all disease and Barley yellow dwarf. So be good to yourself and kind to your neighbors, control that volunteer wheat! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Weeds in Pastures?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This is the time of year that I start to get questions from concerned pasture managers about weeds in pastures. I want to put weeds in quotes, which of course you can't see on the radio, because if there is a plant growing anywhere that we think shouldn't be there, we call it a weed. I always like to remind pasture managers that the prairie, or the native range if you prefer, is in fact far more than just grass. Researchers refer to grasses as grasses, but all the broadleaf plants, what many of you might call wildflowers or perhaps weeds, are referred to as forbs. If you look at the total weight of grasses and forbs in a tall grass prairie, you'll probably find that 10 to 20% of the total dry matter growing out there is forbs. So even if it seems like there's a lot of forbs, or weeds, there probably isn't. Also interesting to note is that cattle, on a percentage base, eat quite a bit of those forbs, in fact, under average conditions, by the end of the season, cattle will have consumed about 50% of the total forb production but only about 40% of the total grass produced. Remember, many of those native forbs are legumes and can add a lot of early season protein to the forage mix. There certainly are some broadleaf plants that need to be controlled - sericea lespedeza, crownvetch, and musk thistle come to mind. But a lot of the plants that you'll see blooming in the next two months, are probably less of an issue than you think and don't need to be sprayed. In fact sometimes, the presence of a lot of forbs can indicate grazing management issues. But if you're in doubt, give me a call and I'll come out and take a look! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat Harvest Review - Why Was It Better than expected?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The ongoing discussion with Geary County wheat growers the past few weeks kept focusing on the wheat harvest and the fact that it was much better than any of us thought it might be. Which then eventually led to the question of why. I'll be the first to admit that much of the wheat was far better than I'd thought it would be. Okay, I'll admit it, when it comes to predicting crop yields I tend to be a pessimist. If I'm going to try to forecast yields, I'm usually going to go to the low side so that I won't get anyone's hopes built up too big. I was focusing on all the challenges that the wheat was facing rather than what it was actually doing. A lot of the wheat was short and the leaves, including the flag leaf, were smaller than normal. The wheat got started with good moisture last fall, but moisture quickly became an issue. Rainfall in March was well below normal, rainfall in April was a little above normal and then May was real dry and quite a bit warmer than normal. Then it started raining in June just about the time that we needed it to dry off for harvest! We normally depend on the flag leaf for a lot of the final yield. The flag leaf was often shorter than normal, but the 2nd and 3rd leaves down stayed green because of lack of disease pressure and picked up the slack. I also look at the many small kernels that went out the back of the combine. Those were often the 3rd and 4th berries that if we'd have had rain in May, would have stayed in the combine. We had a good crop, much better than just a few miles west of us, but just one or two more rains in May and the crop would have been amazing! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.