

2014 Wheat Crop, Early Evaluation

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Finally, just last week, and that day of 80 degree weather probably had something to do with it, the wheat really started to green up. They say that a wheat crop has nine lives and I think we've only gone through 1 or 2 of those lives so far, but through the middle of March, here's my take on where the 2014 wheat crop is so far. For the most part it's in good to very good shape. Winter kill has been very limited and pretty well restricted to where you'd expect it, on terrace tops or areas where the wind blew the snow away. We also have areas that were planted late that are still looking a little thin. I've seen areas in wheat planted into notill beans that we are again going to have problems with seed not getting punched down into the soil and trying to grow in residue. This areas will die with the first heat and dry spell. The cold weather did a pretty good job of killing all the leaf material in the wheat plants which is important because that means that rust will have to blow in from the south. Early indications are that this could be a fairly light wheat year, but as the saying goes, there's a lot of game left! The wild card and the biggest concern right now is moisture. We've had okay moisture this winter, in fact February was above normal, but it was the first month since October that we were above normal precipitation. If we continue to get adequate rain, we could be looking at a lot of 70 and 80 bushel wheat. But if it turns off dry, you can cut that in half real fast! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Marestail control 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 don't think that there's any doubt that the most rapidly growing weed problem in soybeans in recent years has been marestail. It never was well controlled by glyphosate, especially once it gets much size on it. Fortunately, we have several very good control options for marestail IF we start now. Most marestail sprouts in the fall. This time of year, and especially this year, it's still fairly small and as such easily controlled, but not with glyphosate. 2,4-D or dicamba is inexpensive and when applied early in the season will give very good control. One of the critical things to keep in mind though is that in these no-till settings you need to be applying 15 to 20 pounds of water per acre to insure good coverage. My recommendation would be to use the 2 in combination AND then include something to give additional residual control such as Canopy EX, Autumn Super, Classic, First Rate, Sharpen, metribuzin or Valor. Sharpen is a newer product that provides excellent marestail control. Keep in mind that if you wait until the marestail is starting to bolt, you are in for problems. One product that can be used in a preplant burndown where larger marestail is involved is Liberty. It seems to be about the best to control bolting marestail. The other word of caution I need to toss out there is to watch your waiting period between 2,4-D applications and planting. Depending on your product and rate you will need to allow anywhere from 7 to 30 days and usually at least one half inch of rain. Be sure to read the label directions, go with full rates and use recommended additives. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Is it too late to fertilize wheat or brome grass?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've started getting a few calls about whether because of the lateness of the season people should be cutting way back on fertilizing wheat or brome grass. And my immediate answer has been no, not if you can get it on by the end of the month. This late winter season, more than any other I can remember in recent years, has been holding plants dormant very well. Which is a good thing. If you have not gotten your wheat or brome grass fertilized yet, get it planned ASAP. While it would have been better to have had the fertilizer on back in December, both plants are still early enough in their spring growth that a significant impact can be made. Wheat head size is determined about two weeks prior to wheat jointing. While we are getting quite a bit of growth on our wheat in recent days, we're still a ways off from jointing. The same thing goes for brome grass. We can still significantly impact how big those leaves grow but we have to get the fertilizer applied soon so that any rain we get can carry it in to the root zone. How much fertilizer should you apply? In the absence of a soil test I'd recommend that for brome grass you apply 80 pounds of nitrogen, 25 pounds of phosphorus and 10 pounds of sulfur. The sulfur may surprise some folks but it isn't that expensive and we've had some indication that we need sulfur more often than we apply it. For wheat, including your starter fertilizer, I'd like 110 to 120 pounds total of nitrogen applied, and then 20 pounds of phosphorus and 15 pounds of chloride, for the same reason as the sulfur on the brome! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.