

Ag Radio programs for September 29 - October 5, 2014

Planting wheat into sorghum residue

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the real challenges that we have had, in the switch to no-till farming, is planting wheat into crop residue. Corn, sorghum, even soybeans, all give us some special challenges if we are going right back to wheat this fall. Soybeans, while not thought of as a heavy residue crop, wind up putting a lot of junk in between the rows. If we don't have enough pressure on the drill, wheat seed gets planted in the residue, not down in the soil and we'll see more winterkill, and early die out after green up. Plant a round and start digging through the heaviest residue to make sure you are getting seed through that residue and at least one inch in the soil. Corn residue we basically have to make sure we just put on enough seed. I really feel that we need to be dropping 100 to 120 pounds of seed and even more if planting into corn stalks after November 1st. Sorghum brings a double challenge. Not only do we need to seed heavy, like starting with 120 pounds and going to 150 after November 1st, but we also need to apply more fertilizer, especially nitrogen. There's been a lot of study of this phenomenon and it doesn't appear that we have any allelopathic problems from the sorghum residue, but we do have plants that may not be dead yet at seeding time fighting for water and nutrients. We may also have a lot of nitrogen getting tied up in breaking down organic matter. So, for a quick recap, if planting into bean stubble, lots of down pressure. Into corn or sorghum, more seed and more N in sorghum stubble! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Last Cutting of Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. That last cutting of alfalfa can always be kind of tricky. I was in Minnesota recently and saw some stands that had been hurt last winter from late cutting. Granted, those conditions are going to be a bit harsher than what we get around here! But we can still end up cutting alfalfa a little on the late side and have it go into winter dormancy with less than a full stash of food reserves in the roots. There are many variations on how much growth or how much time we need after our last cutting before we have a killing freeze. But the challenge comes down to figuring out when that killing freeze is going to occur. Our annual first frost is around October 20th. But a killing freeze is colder than that, basically around 25 degrees. We need 350 to 400 growing degree days or 3 to 4 weeks of growth with typical October weather. So, if you look at the past 60 years worth of fall temperatures, our average first date for a low below 26 degrees is going to be about November 5th. The problem is that it has been as early as October 6th and as late as December 7th. So what do you do? Over the past ten years, we've been running pretty close to that long term average. If you've got decent growth on your alfalfa, and can get it cut by the end of this week, do it. We would expect to have enough growth before those mid 20 temperatures come around that we should get enough regrowth. If you don't think you can get it done by the end of the week, or it's a new cutting, or you're in a dry spot and not sure you'd get much regrowth, let it go. Then if you want, wait until the day before that cold snap and cut then. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

More on Fall Bindweed Control

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 talking a lot about fall control of field bindweed. Keep in mind that bindweed is a noxious weed that may well be a bigger problem in non-crop areas now days than in crop areas. The reason I harp about fall treatments so much is quite simply because of success. Spring treatments or even mid summer treatments are a good way to control new seedlings, but for a well established plant with a big root system, it just isn't going to cut it. Surprisingly, several products that you might think would control bindweed with a fall treatment are much weaker than you would expect. Keep in mind that what ever you use to control bindweed it is going to take a long term approach. Long term meaning staying after it for three to five years! When we look at results of fall treatments based on % control of the bindweed the following spring we see some drastic differences. Low rates of dicamba will provide basically 20 to 50% control. Fall treatment with glyphosate may be as good as 70% control but may very well be less than 50% control. Where practical though, a spring or summer treatment can provide 65% control which explains why roundup ready crops have allowed such good control of bindweed. But time and time again, the herbicide Paramount, active ingredient quinclorac either alone or in combination with 4 to 8 ounces of dicamba will give you 90 to 98% control. One pint rates of Tordon can come close to that, but Tordon has some recropping limitations. So if you've got bindweed to control, get yourself some Paramount and add a little dicamba! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.