

Mustard Control in Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We need to control weeds in our crops. We all know this. And because we often sort of take it for granted we don't realize how much a heavy infestations of weeds can cause us. In the case of winter wheat we have two groups of weeds that we routinely worry about - the cheat grasses and the winter annual broadleaf weeds, mainly the mustards. Mustards start growing about the same time that the wheat does. With this year's dry October, and then rain the end of October, the middle of November and the end of November, and then those wonderful December days with temperatures 20 degrees above long term average, we will have had a lot of late emerging mustards that if you aren't paying attention, you won't see until they pop up above the wheat and start to bloom! Often, wheat producers are waiting until they topdress in February to apply weed control. But far too many times that February treatment becomes a late March or April treatment and then you are way behind on everything. Last week would have been an awesome time to apply not only fertilizer but also herbicide. I'm betting we are going to have more opportunities in the coming weeks and you need to be poised to strike. An untreated heavy infestation of mustard can cut wheat yields over 80%. Even a delayed spring treatment can cut yields 50 to 60%. Because of the growing problems of herbicide resistance I would strong suggest using a tank mix of herbicides that have different modes of action. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Body Condition Scoring

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Body condition scoring, or BCS - not of that college football championship fiasco - is a management tool used to evaluate nutritional needs of cows based on observed differences in body fat. It isn't rocket science and even this agronomist can do okay with it! Ultimately, it is the best indicator of an operation's ability to meet herd requirements with available resources. A scoring system of 1 to 9 has been developed for U.S. beef cows where 1 is extremely thin and 9 is obese. A body condition score of 5 to 6 represents the optimum body condition score. Research has shown a strong link between cow body condition and reproductive performance. To rebreed in a timely manner, mature cows should calve in a body condition score of 5 or greater (but not much greater). The target BCS at calving for first calf heifers is 6 because additional nutrients are required for the additional growth these cattle still have to do. You can judge a cow's body condition by feeling the fat cover over the ribs and spines. With practice you can learn to evaluate animals visually without ever having to handle them, therefore allowing you to do a quick herd wide evaluation at any time. By learning to evaluate by eyeing the spine, ribs, hooks and pins, tailhead, brisket and muscling, you can quickly assign a score of 1 - 9 to your cows and heifers. For more information and bulletins on this, including a handy body condition score record book, just drop by the office and visit with me and pick up copies of this valuable cow herd management tool! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wrapping up another year

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We are rapidly running out of the year 2015. While some folks feel that's good, and others are wondering where the heck it went, farmers and ranchers should be busy getting their end of year books in order. One critical part of that process, in my opinion, is for landlords and tenants to sit down and discuss the year just past, the year ahead and what adjustments might be needed in the lease. 2013 and 2014 were good years, really good years. Cash leases went shooting up. Cattle prices were good and pasture leases went through the roof. Well, we all know that what goes around comes around and here comes the down side of those cycles. 2015 was an okay year, kind of, thanks to decent yields, but 2016 is going to have its challenges. Landlords, if you pushed cash rental prices up in those good years, it's time to start bringing them back down. Tenants, be honest with your landlords. Don't play the "woe is me" card but be honest with your landlords. If you have a crop share lease, talk about the items shared and not shared. You may want to get a copy of the KSU-Lease spreadsheet and see if your current shares are equitable with the expenses that are being shared. Soybean and corn seed has gotten crazy expensive and maybe it's time that we take another look at whether seed is a shared expense or not. Let me just say that a growing number of leases in the corn and bean belt, and even here in Kansas, are sharing seed expense. Herbicide expense is going to be going up as we deal with glyphosate resistance, but those seed costs are still way over the herbicide costs! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.