

Ag Radio programs for December 7 - 13, 2015

Impact of heavy rain on grazing crop residue or wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'll be the first to admit that I did not expect to get THAT much rain the end of November. We very quickly went from slightly dry to abundantly wet. Then on top of all of that we had an ice storm. While the ice is certainly long gone, things are still plenty moist, okay muddy, and it brings up questions about the advisability of continuing to graze wheat, cover crops or crop residue. Starting with crop residue I wouldn't hesitate to continue to graze corn or sorghum stalks. The ice certainly took a toll on some of that residue with corn being the most fragile. Keep an eye on the fields for truly available forage though and be prepared to move cattle off the stalks as usable forage wanes. While muddy, I think crop residue fields shouldn't see much impact from compaction. But like I said, keep an eye on body condition scores of the cattle and available forage. If you aren't seeing many leaves left out there, you need to be getting cattle moved someplace else with more feed resources. I would be a little concerned about grazing wheat under really muddy conditions however. And it's not compaction that concerns me. You can get a fair amount of stand loss from plants literally getting shoved into the ground. Cover crops are another story and I wouldn't hesitate to continue to graze those cover crops. You'll be planting something else in there anyway so get that forage used up. But again, pay attention to the amount of usable forage out there and be prepared to start to supplement when needed. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Enlist technology on hold

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'm sure some of you have been following the latest in crop and herbicide technology evolution. One that had a lot of folks excited about was the Enlist Duo herbicide to be used with Enlist Corn and Soybeans. The herbicide is a combination of glyphosate and a new formulation 2,4-D, a choline salt. The strongest advantage of this new formulation was much lower volatility. These extremely low volatility 2,4-D formulations have been around for a long time. I've used some of them and while they weren't easy to mix, they were truly low volatility - I couldn't even smell 2,4-D when I was spraying. Well, Enlist Duo received a full federal corn label in November of 2014 but was on hold waiting for approval from China that they would accept Enlist Duo hybrids for import. Well, within the past couple of weeks, EPA has pulled the registration asking for more information. There's a lot of speculation as to whether this was over unproven claims for the herbicide, the need for larger buffer zones next to sensitive crops or just what, but it is on hold. The nice advantage to this is that you would have another tool for dealing with glyphosate resistant pigweeds and once the label is also approved for soybeans, you'd be able to use 2,4-D on beans for enhanced broadleaf control. Keep in mind, you'd need to be treating pigweeds that are less than 4 inches tall, not 2 feet tall! But for the time being, that is all on hold while Dow and the EPA are trying to sort this out. In the meantime, start looking for the first of the dicamba resistant soybeans that are getting ready to hit the market! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What is soil health?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you haven't started to hear about soil health, just get ready, you will be. Soil health is a catch phrase but what it's talking about is everything that can be done to maintain soil has a healthy ecosystem of it's own. All too often, people have assumed that soil is a purely mineral substrate that we build houses and roads on and grow plants in. Soil, productive and healthy soil, is nearly a living organism of it's own. A healthy soil is going to have 25% pore space full of air, 25% pore space full of water, About 45% mineral compounds and 5% organic matter. If that soil is healthy, it also has millions of bacteria hundreds of yards of fungal filaments, 1000s of protozoa and dozens of nematodes in one teaspoon of soil. Then there's all the other arthropods and earthworms and who knows what else. All of these critters, both big and small are critical to that soil health. I visited Mt St. Helens in Washington State a few years ago. Much of the blast zone was still barren volcanic ash. Slowly plants were starting to re-colonize but this was slow going because it takes so long for all the microscopic critters to get re-established. All these critters break down organic matter into nutrients, they help allow water to infiltrate the soil and they allow soil to hold water. Soil health is critical in crop production. No till or reduced till is helping to improve our soil health but there's much more that we need to learn about. Cover crops may well be a part of that as is nutrient management. All of these things are good crop production and good for the environment downstream. Stay tuned for more info! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK,

I'm Chuck Otte.