

What Did We Learn From the 2015 Wheat Crop

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Something that I don't think we do often enough is to take some time to review the crop year after harvest is over. Especially this year we were trying to finish wheat harvest while we were finishing bean and sorghum planting and putting up alfalfa and brome hay and starting on prairie hay. But before this year's wheat crop becomes too distant of a memory let's do a quick review to see what we learned. First of all, never give up on a wheat crop as long as it's still green. I doubt that any of us, on May 1, would have ever guessed that we'd have the yields that we did. It was short, the heads were small and we were merely hoping for a crop to harvest. Remember, always manage the wheat crop like it's got an 80 bushel potential because most years, it probably does. The genetics are in today's varieties, we just have to make sure the fuel is there to make it happen if it rains. Next, we probably need to consider using foliar fungicides a little more often. Sure, some years there will be no benefit. But we can't predict the weather so maybe we just plan to treat our more susceptible varieties every year just in case we get that wet month of May! Another take home message, always, always use fungicidal seed treatments. There'll be a lot of work figuring out where flag smut came from and we dodged it locally. But those smut diseases are easily dealt with by spending a few dollars per acre more and always planting treated seed. We could probably spend more time on this, but let's learn from this year. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dealing With Cheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As I was talking recently, this year's wheat crop surprised a lot of folks in many different ways. One thing that snuck in on a lot of folks was cheat, or more accurately, those weedy annual bromes of true cheat, downy brome and Japanese brome. When we started doing a lot more crop rotation in the 1990's a lot of our annual brome issues didn't necessarily go away, but they became less of an issue. We've known for decades that the best way to deal with these grasses was with crop rotation. But then we have a soybean crop coming off late and we shift our rotation plans around and wind up with wheat on wheat on wheat and boom, the wheat crop is thin one spring and then you have a whole bunch of cheat. Two years out of wheat will pretty well take care of 99.9% of the cheat seed reservoir. The seed is very short lived especially in no till fields. Our burn down herbicides and residual herbicides in our spring row crops will do a good job of taking care of the annual bromes. Now, if you do go into even two years of consecutive wheat, consider one of the numerous herbicides we now have available and we don't even have to think Clearfield varieties. Each of these herbicides does have different strengths depending on the annual brome you are dealing with so knowing which one of the primary three you have is the first step and I can help you with that. Olympus may be our best product but even good old metribuzin has good control. Others include PowerFlex, Maverick, Finesse G&B, and Everest. But first identify your annual bromes and pay attention to wheat growth stages. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

Do Insecticide Seed Treatments on Wheat Do Any Good

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Since the combination fungicide/insecticide seed treatments like Gaucho, Cruiser and many others became available over the past ten years, we've had an ongoing debate as to whether the insecticide portion of these treatments really does any good on wheat. Early orders for wheat seed are already being made and you'll have to make a decision on these. I've gone back and forth on this and in my opinion, the jury is still out. But because there are times when we probably are seeing some advantages, I think you have to make your own case on a field by field basis. The insecticide is going to give you roughly four weeks of insect protection after the plant emerges. We know that the product will give some protection against hessian fly, aphids and probably wheat curl mite. All of these pests are going to be worse in early planted wheat and in fields next to neighbor's fields who haven't controlled their volunteer wheat in a timely manner. If you are going to be grazing wheat, check and make sure that the label will allow grazing. Some do after a waiting period, some don't, at all! If you are going to be planting early then I think you need to consider using an insecticide seed treatment just because you are likely to see more insect pests. If you are planting after about October 15th, I question whether it'll do you any good. We honestly still haven't really determined how much it will reduce wheat streak mosaic or barley yellow dwarf because the insect pest has to feed on the seedling to get the chemical and die and by the time they've taken that first bite, the virus can be passed. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.