

Are We Through Planting Wheat?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Here's the challenge with this radio program - I will have written and recorded this program 3 to 7 days before you hear it. I wrote this the middle of last week. Rain, or at least showers, was forecast for late last week. Some areas may have gotten a nice little rain late last week, or not. The last significant precipitation, meaning basically anything over a quarter of an inch, was September 11th. That's almost two months ago. The ground is dry. What has not been germinating. Some was germinating and already dying from dry weather. I was receiving phone calls last week asking my thoughts on planting any more wheat this fall. My gut instinct is not to plant any more wheat. IF you received more than a half inch of rain late last week, okay, you could sneak in a little more, but do it fast and plant at least two bushels per acre. We are slowly moving back into drought conditions, in fact we are already there. We are in no man's land for all that El Nino moisture they've been talking about. The way it is setting up right now it'll be late winter before we see any. Are the prognosticator's correct? I'll let you know in six months. But in the mean time, I would be very hesitant to put any more wheat in the ground. If we get good winter and early spring moisture we can go with one of our spring crops. If we don't get good winter and early spring moisture, it could be a very long 2016. If you had planted wheat a little on the early side hoping to get some grazing, make sure it's well rooted first! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall Fertilization of Brome and Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The past couple of years I've really been promoting and encouraging fertilizing brome grass, or fescue, and alfalfa in the late fall and early winter ahead of ground freeze up. To some extent, I feel that even wheat fertilization should be done before January 1st. Every producer has all good intentions of fertilizing in February AND then weather turns on us and all of a sudden it's late March or early April and we are rushing to try to get all these fields fertilized and it's already gotten too late. By fertilizing in November or December the fertilizer is there ready for any little rain or snow event to carry it into the soil. Even though the grass is slowly going dormant the roots are still actively taking up nutrients and setting them aside for future use. When the grass starts growing, often as early as mid February, it can continue to take up that fertilizer and start putting it to good use very early on. Long term studies have shown that there is virtually no difference in yield between a November and February application. In fact, these same long term studies have shown that when moisture is or could be limiting, a November application is the preferred option. I'm a firm believer that in the absence of soil test results, you should be fertilizing with 80 to 90 pounds of nitrogen, 20 pounds of phosphorus and 10 pounds of sulfur. And while you're at it, don't forget about your alfalfa. Unless you know you have good soil phosphorus levels from soil tests, I like to see alfalfa fertilizer with 30 to 40 pounds of phosphorus in the fall or winter. This can be done anytime in the next few months. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dormant weed control in Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Roundup Ready alfalfa is, at least for a time, going to do a great job of providing very clean alfalfa fields. But keeping in mind what has happened in soybean and corn production, I encourage producers with Roundup Ready alfalfa to also consider using a dormant season herbicide. If you have traditional alfalfa then you absolutely want to use a dormant season herbicide treatment. Unlike the phosphorus applications though you need that alfalfa to be dormant before you treat and it just isn't quite there yet because we haven't had enough cold weather. BUT also don't get caught waiting too long in the spring because all too often you try to wait just a little bit longer and all of a sudden your alfalfa is growing and it is too late. If your biggest concern is the cheat grasses and mustards, then the sooner you can get it applied yet this fall the better. Good old metribuzin, we used to know it as Sencor, is a very economical product with good control of the cheat grasses and excellent control of the mustards. Apply it at the full pound rate and you're likely to also get some early season summer annual control as well. If your bigger concern are the summer annual weeds then I'd try to wait until late February to apply it to have longer control. Of course there are several other dormant season treatments that you can use as well. Velpar, Sinbar, Karmex all have equally good results on the broadleaf winter annuals, although Karmex is not going to do much on the cheat grasses. But again, the key on these dormant season applications is to make sure that the alfalfa is dormant, which it isn't yet! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK,

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