Ag Radio programs for September 21 - 27, 2015

Wheat Following Corn

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The evolution of no till farming practices is very interesting. 25 years ago I would have imagined that most of the wheat being planted no-till would have been following soybeans just because of the issue of dealing with residue. Okay, let's fast forward to today. While we do get a fair amount of wheat being planted into bean stubble, we also get a lot being planted into corn stubble. The reason for this is simple. Look at how much corn is being harvested right now and how many soybeans are being harvested right now. The changes in the genetics have allowed the corn to dry down quicker and be ready for harvest ahead of standard wheat planting time. The changes in the soybean genetics are going the other direction and allowing the soybeans to stay green longer in the fall which usually helps out on yield. You can successfully notill wheat into corn stubble but you need to make some adjustments to your standard planting practices. First of all make sure that you are getting seed placement at the right depth. Aim for 1.5 to 2 inches deep in the soil. Next, you will want to increase seeding rates probably about 20% over what you would be planting in clean till or wheat or soybean stubble at the same time of year. If you would normally be planting 70 pounds of seed, kick it up to about 85 pounds. Realize that you will have a higher risk of fusarium head blight, or scab, so look for varieties with some resistance to that and also increase nitrogen rates about 20%. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Grain Sorghum Field Day

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. While grain sorghum isn't planted on as many acres as it was 20 years ago, it is still an important crop and on limited rainfall will generally out perform even the newer drought tolerant corn hybrids. For those who are still growing grain sorghum we've got a great opportunity to attend this year's fall field day at the Agronomy Farm just north of the football stadium in Manhattan. The date for this year's field day is Friday, October 9th. Registration starts at 9 a.m., programs at 9:30 and it will wrap up at 1 p.m. There will be a wide variety of topics discussed. Higher yields is probably everyone's number one desire in sorghum and the KSU sorghum breeder and sorghum geneticists will be talking about this topic. There'll be a couple of speakers that lightly delve into some of the physiology of the sorghum plant and how it deals with heat and water stress. We'll hear a presentation on some new herbicide resistant sorghums and no, this is not GMO, just traditional plant breeding. We'll also hear about crop rotations using sorghum and how sorghum responds to cover crops in no till systems. And yes, of course, there will be an update on sugarcane aphids and what we've learned this year - the first year we've really had to deal with them. The field day is free but you do need to register. You can call the extension agronomy head office at K-State, 785-532-5776 to get registered. But since you probably didn't get that number written down, just give me a call at the Extension office and I can call your name in to get you registered. The Extension office number is 238-4161. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Seed Placement Depth Crucial for Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Late this fall and especially early next spring I will start getting calls from producers who have spots in their wheat fields that just don't look very good. Invariably the producer will think that there's a disease or insect problem. Sometimes there is a disease or insect problem, but most of the time when I investigate stand issues, it comes down to something far simpler. The wheat in that part of the field was not planted deep enough. Wheat is a grass. When the seed sprouts, a primary root is sent out of the bottom of the seed. This primary, or first, root is very important for the first few weeks of the wheat plant's life. While the primary root often stays alive for the entire life of the wheat plant, it becomes of less importance as the plant grows. What becomes critically important or the secondary or crown roots. Secondary roots arise from the crown which is a series of underground nodes that develop between the seed and the soil surface. These secondary roots are what create that large mass of roots that you see when you pull up a well developed wheat plant. To allow room between the seed and the soil surface for this crown and ultimately secondary roots to develop, the seed needs to be at least 1 inch below the soil surface and preferably 1.5 inches. The problem that we run in to is that planting no till into residue, and amazingly we have the most issues in soybean residue, we don't get enough down pressure and the seed is often less than a half inch into the soil. At that depth it can't develop a good set of secondary roots and by early spring, the plant shows the stress! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.