

Wheat Freeze Damage?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Back on April 3rd and 4th we saw temperatures in most parts of the state drop down below freezing from anywhere from 1 to 14 hours. That weather was cold enough for long enough to cause damage, at least in some parts of the state. So far I've yet to see anything more than a few frosted leaf tips on fields locally. We were fortunate that for the most part the temperatures weren't very cold for very long locally. However, there are parts of Kansas that weren't so lucky. The further along the wheat is, the less cold weather it takes to cause damage. Once wheat starts growing after winter, cold tolerance is lost in a hurry. At early joint, damage is going to start at 19 degrees. Once a plant is in full joint stage, meaning that the head and lower nodes have moved out of the crown, that critical temperature jumps up to about 28 degrees. The critical temperature is when damage begins. Take another 6 or 7 degrees off that and you are looking at serious damage. Like I said earlier, damage is predicated first by the absolute low temperature and secondly by the duration of the cold weather. The colder it gets, the more damage you will see. The longer it is cold, the more damage you will see. In general it can take 5 to 10 days for damage to start to show up so if you had some low lying spots in fields in creek or river valleys, damage should be readily seen or smelled, by now. You can in fact smell damage following a freeze. As the weather warms back up, in a few days you WILL smell it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

When to plant corn

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know as I record this that there is already corn in the ground. Warm weather conditions in late March and early April crank up corn farmers just like it cranks up honeybees. This has been a crazy year with some things being early some being late and others being just about right on time. Even though corn is pretty cold tolerant, I like to have soil temperatures above 55 degrees before we start planting. Late last week soil temperatures were only 56 degrees and they were cooler in no-till fields. A couple of days of cloudy cool weather and that temperature can easily drop a couple of degrees. I know that there's a desire to get that corn in the ground. You've got one eye on the forecast and you see a few days in a row of possible rain and you just feel the need to get out there and get some seed planted. Don't be in a hurry. Yes, it could turn off wet for several days and if it does, the soil is going to cool down and germination is going to slow down. I will agree that we all feel better getting that corn in the ground before May 1, but most years even planting as late as May 10th doesn't appear to hurt yield that bad. I'd really encourage corn growers to go to the hardware store and get one of those digital cooking thermometers with a 4 inch metal stem. They make the simplest soil thermometer I've ever seen. Turn it on, stick it in the ground about 9:30 in the morning give it a few minutes to equalize and then read the temperature. And if that temperature is still under 60 degrees, I wouldn't be in a hurry to roll that planter into the field! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

HOT class forming

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Federal law requires that any 14 or 15 year olds that want to operate tractors or machinery on a farm that is NOT owned by their parents, must have successfully completed a safety training class. Once the youth turns 16 that stipulation doesn't matter and technically youth under the age of 14 should not be operating a tractor or any equipment on a farm not owned by their parent. Locally we've gone through a phase with not a lot of youth on our farms, but that is changing and it's time to have a hazardous occupation and safety training, sometimes just called tractor safety. Dickinson County Extension Agent Laura Marks and I are cooperatively planning one for early May, tentatively planning to hold it in Chapman if the details can be worked out. The dates are May 6th and 7th. We will start about 5:30 pm and go until about 9:00. There will also be a little homework and reading for 14 and 15 year old participants to do ahead of time. A simple meal will be served both evenings and there will be a modest charge to help cover costs. While the training is aimed at 14 and 15 year olds, it will be open to younger youth probably 10 years and older. The younger youth can't be certified, but it is good training opportunity and we'd even welcome parents to sit in, as long as they stay quiet! More details will be forthcoming and it is open to any youth, not just Dickinson and Geary counties. We do need to have pre-registration to make sure we have enough supplies and food so please call the Extension office, 785-238-4161 to register or call me up and ask any questions you may have! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.