

Winterkill

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 afraid might happen, we're beginning to see a little more winterkill on wheat. Most of the time this has been in later planted wheat, often following soybeans, but I've also seen a fair amount in earlier planted wheat. Winterkill is hard to predict. We know that with reduced snow cover, such as on terrace tops, we're going to see more winter injury. This year we've been perfectly set up for issues. October was warm and early planted wheat generally became well established. But November turned off abnormally cold and stayed that way. Many plants struggled to become well established. Then we had low snowfall amounts that failed to stick around very long. We did have an inch of rain the end of January, but it's been dry since then. The surface soil 1 to 2 inches is powdered up to the point that when wheat was breaking dormancy and trying to grow a few weeks ago, crowns of many wheat plants were in dry soil. Crowns in dry soil really struggle to put out those critical secondary roots. We got a little bit of rain the end of March that helped marginally. But some of these plants were so small that they simply weren't able to get roots down where they needed to be. The good news is that we still have time to make adjustments to cropping plans. If you have a thin looking field and haven't applied herbicide yet, you may want to wait until we can evaluate it. If you do have one of those fields, give me a call. I'll be happy to come out and evaluate the wheat condition and options. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat varieties

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In the mid 1980s wheat production was king. We grew as much wheat as all the other crops combined. Now days wheat has to fight to have more acres than soybeans. Statewide we are growing a couple million acres less of wheat than we once did. But it is still an important crop. At that time, the wheat variety Newton was very popular. One year in the mid 1980s more than 2 of every 3 acres of wheat was planted to Newton in the state. Everybody was planting Newton. We've never seen anything like that since, fortunately. For the wheat crop in the ground right now, the number one variety is Everest which statewide is planted on just under 16% of the acres. That's the kind of diversity I like to see! Amazingly, blends of 2 or more varieties make up 9.6% for #2 (never thought I'd see that). TAM 111 a popular wheat out west, is #3 at 9.1%. And then all of a sudden you are down to varieties that are only making up 5% or much less of the planted wheat varieties. In fact, the top ten varieties still don't even add up to 60% - that's a lower percentage than Newton had in one year! And that's a good thing. In east central Kansas, which includes Geary county, Everest accounted for 41% of the wheat acres, Cedar was second at only 4.5% and Armour third at 3.7%. Diversity in what we plant protects us from all sorts of issues. Diseases, insects, even susceptibility to varying weather conditions becomes a bigger concern when more and more acres are planted to one variety. You've done a good job of spreading out your risk, producers! Keep it up and let's hope for a good wheat harvest! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Musk Thistle Control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It suddenly occurred to me a few weeks ago that I have not talked about musk thistle for several years. When I arrived in Geary County in the early 1980s, musk thistle was a big problem. There were huge patches of it in many pastures AND on government property in the area. I spent a lot of time talking about musk thistle and the many options to control it. It was, and still is, a noxious weed that if caught before it starts to send up a seed stalk, is easily and effectively controlled! So what happened? Why do we see so much less musk thistle than we did 20 years ago? Well, part of it was the good job that you all did, and still do, in controlling musk thistle. Part of it was also some of the biological controls that were released. I feel that both the crown weevil and the head weevil, or whatever they are properly called, has helped reduce the amount of musk thistle that's around. But we can't back off now. Even with the biological controls, musk thistle could still return to be a big problem. Now is a good time to get out there and look for those rosettes. Even if you burned a pasture, the thistle will survive and produce a seedhead. Scout areas about 10 to 14 days after a burn. By then thistle rosettes will have put out new growth and will be an easy target for herbicide treatments. Go back to areas where you've had problems before. While 2,4-D and dicamba are effective, a little Tordon 22K helps keep any late sprouters from getting started. If you find some that have gotten away from you, definitely use Tordon 22K. And if seed heads develop, cut them off and burn them! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.