

Seed Treatments

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I attended an agent update last week on agronomy. We spent a bit of time talking about the flag smut situation in wheat last summer. After all the finger pointing finally died down it all came down to one simple item. Use a fungicidal seed treatment and it isn't a problem. So, here's my philosophy from here on - don't even bother to ask me if you should treat your seed, for any crop, with a fungicidal seed treatment. I'm going to tell you yes. We are talking a few bucks per acre, this is not a big expense. It doesn't matter whether it is protection against any of the numerous smut diseases out there or protection against the numerous seedling blights that can affect seedlings, seed treatments are one of the cheapest insurance policies you could ask for. It's funny, or maybe it's sad, that I know producers that will spend 20 bucks an acre on something that I would consider snake oil that has very questionable, if any, value to crop production. But these same producers will not spend a fourth that on a seed treatment that has very proven benefits. Insecticidal seed treatments may be of less consistent value, the jury quite honestly is still out on that. But if you are getting the seed treated why not just go all in and get the combo product. Naturally you need to check the label, especially with the insecticidal seed treatments to make sure that they will work if you want to graze wheat or crop residue after harvest, but just don't even think twice from here on out, get the seed treatment applied! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What's the ideal population?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I receive numerous questions every year asking what the best population is for soybeans or corn or milo. I won't worry about wheat right now, but the same principle applies. While I try to give a good answer to these questions, it becomes sort of hard, because it all depends. There are certain times that I can give some absolute answers. Such as in 90% of all soybean environments, there is little to no benefit in a final population in excess of 80,000 plants per acre. Under some high yield irrigated conditions, a final population of 100 to 120,000 may be justified. Ultimately it comes down to which hybrid or variety are you planting, what is the field like, how much fertilizer are you going to apply and how much rain are you going to get? Milo is a classic example of it all depends. Some hybrids tiller readily and extensively, others hardly tiller at all. The problem is that there is no set standard and other than your own experience it is often hard to find out, especially with newer numbers. Then we also have to look at planting date and maturity of the hybrid or variety. With sorghum and soybeans there's also the question of are you using a drill or a planter? All of these items come in to play. What's the best source of information? Probably your own experience and your neighbor's experience. It's also very important to keep track of this in a notebook or something and follow up with in season evaluations. Did the milo tiller well? Were the soybean pods too low to the ground? Was there any pull back on the corn ear tips. All of these are clues as to what population you are using! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Pasture Leases for 2016

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Perhaps even more challenging than figuring out crop land cash rental rates for 2016 is going to be figuring out pasture rental rates. First of all, there will be no Bluestem Pasture Rental rate survey yet again. Costs for these surveys has gone through the roof and since that's one that isn't required by the federal government, national ag statistics won't be doing it. If I'd won the lottery last week I would have considered paying for it myself, but that didn't happen! I'm going to start by giving you a range of where I feel that pasture rental rates should be this year. Given the drop in cattle prices and taking a wild stab at what calves may be bringing next fall, rental rates should be somewhere between \$200 and \$300 per cow calf pair, slightly higher if it's a fall calf. This assumes 8 acres of GRASS per pair. I emphasize the word grass because many pastures lose substantial acres to uncontrolled trees and shrubs. Now, that's a big range and that's on purpose. The more work that the tenant is doing on fence repair, brush control or weed management, then the lower the rate should be. If someone is bringing cattle in from a distance and wants the landlord to oversee the herd through the season, then that comes at a price. I am a firm believer in having written leases and even more so for pasture. In the lease set in and out dates, penalties for late removal, within reason of course, expectation for management by the tenant and you may even want to include herd reduction options in case of drought. Things have changed in agriculture and leases should reflect these changes. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.