

Ag Radio programs for the week of June 20, 2016

Harvest Safety - Crownvetch - Postemerge weed control could be tough

This is Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent with the Ag Outlook for the week of June 13, 2016. Harvest has gotten started and with temperatures in the triple digits, sunshine and breezes, it'll probably move fairly quickly. Wheat harvest is neither as big as it once was or nearly as long but it still occurs in a hot time of year, this year very hot, and we all need to keep an eye on each other. Drink lots of water - lots and lots of water in this weather. Even though you may be in an air conditioned combine cab or tractor cab or whatever, you are still spending a lot of time in the heat and sun and that sucks the water out of you very fast. Not only look out for yourself, look out for everyone else on your crew. In weather like this someone can go down in a hurry so just be careful. Also don't let the heat and fatigue take away your safety sense. We've had accidents already and far too close to home. We just need to be really careful out there, please!

As you drive back and forth to town with your loads of wheat I'm sure that you are seeing a lot of the masses of pretty pinkish white flowers on the roadsides. This is crownvetch and if any plant ever deserved to be on the noxious weed list, this is it. Crownvetch is not a true vetch, but it is a legume. It can grow in very poor soil, in very rocky soil even on very steep banks. And for that reason, many state departments of transportation have made heavy use of it over the past 40 years to stabilize road cuts. While it does this very well, it also spreads very well through vigorous underground rhizomes and heavy seed production. Once well established it ventures beyond the roadsides and starts invading anything that is not regularly mowed. Readily

moving and invading areas where it wasn't planted is one strike against it. The second strike is that it smothers everything that it overtakes. It will pretty well smother out native prairie and even brome grass. It creates such a thick mat that other plants simply can't compete. The final strike against it is its prolific seed production. Once established it creates a lot of seed. Seed that can live for 10 to 15 years in the soil. So even if you kill off the existing plants, you've got to spend the next 15 years, or more, looking for and treating new seedlings. If you have crownvetch moving out of roadways on to your land, anywhere, I would start to treat it. Based on several phone calls I've had this spring, more and more people are becoming concerned about crownvetch. Crownvetch can be a tough plant to kill, but fortunately you can start right now. I would pull out the heavy hitters on crownvetch and would go straight to Triclopyr + 2,4,D. Apply with a good thorough soaking spray, mixing according to label directions. A newer product, Milestone, has good activity on legumes and may be a little less damaging on non legume broadleaf plants. Escort XP also has crownvetch on it's label and should be effective any time the plant is actively growing. Regardless of how you attack it, if you have it on your property, start fighting it now as it only gets tougher the more of it there is.

I want to wind up this weeks segment talking about post emerge weed control. I've been seeing a lot of weeds coming in soybean fields especially that are going to require post emerge control. The problem is that many of these weeds, like the crops themselves, are stressed. Stressed plants are not carrying on with normal physiological processes which means that herbicides are not going to work as well or possibly not at all. Which can leave you with a real tough choice - treat now only to have to treat later or wait until we get some rain. I'm of the opinion that given the dicey nature of using herbicides when it is so hot on plants that are highly

stressed, that we just sit tight. Unless you have an irrigated bean field where everything is growing well, you really need to wait and get some rain. The weeds aren't going to grow that much more until we get rain and given the price of many of these postemerge products I'd just sit tight and wait and see. If it doesn't rain, it's not going to matter anyway!

This has been Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent with Ag Outlook for this week.