

## Ag Radio programs for the week of June 6, 2016

Brome hay - Potato Leafhoppers - Sugar Cane Aphids - Pale Corn

This is Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent with the Ag Outlook for the week of June 6, 2016. With the rain finally clearing and dry weather returning I've seen a lot of alfalfa finally getting swathed. What I've also noticed is that the bromegrass is flowering now also. We get the best combination of quantity and quality when we swath our brome at or shortly after flowering. So while you've got the swather out there and running get the brome put up too. I've seen a lot of brome already down but let's not wait too long on the rest of it! I know a lot of folks are disappointed in the apparent poor growth of their brome this year and a lot of that goes back to lack of rainfall in February through late April. When you think about when the fertilizer was put on, in many cases it sat there until late April when we finally had enough rain to carry it into the soil. I'm going to just keep repeating that I think we need to start getting brome, and often wheat, fertilized in late November or early December. Just more opportunities to get that fertilizer in to the soil.

It does look like alfalfa weevils are finally leaving the fields but we've had some reports of potato leafhoppers stunting growth. If you are not getting good regrowth with the rain we've had, we need to consider this as a possibility. About 3 minutes in the field with a sweep net and I can tell you if that's the problem. The other possibility, especially if it's a newer stand, is phosphorus deficiency and/or low soil pH. I keep saying it but at least once a year I see another alfalfa field that was planted without soil testing and the pH is way below where it needs to be for good alfalfa production. I've heard some folks say that they've been growing good soybeans

so didn't figure that they'd need to check the pH. What I can tell you is that alfalfa is more sensitive to low pH than soybeans. So next time you're going to plant some new alfalfa - don't mess around, just soil test first!

Last year we got our first look at Sugar Cane Aphids in grain sorghum. We're probably going to see even more this year and given the early season situation to the south, we may see them even earlier. Of course, given all the rain they've been having, they may be 90% drowned by now! None the less, once grain sorghum is up and out of the ground I'll be out scouting. Keep in mind that there's no less than 4 different species of aphids that we can expect to see on grain sorghum so just because you see aphids, don't automatically assume that they are sugar cane aphids, especially if they are concentrated at the top of the plants in the whorl. But if you are seeing aphids, give me a call and let me know so I can come out and scout them. If they are sugar cane aphids we will want to keep a close watch on them.

I've seen a fair amount of corn that is looking pretty darn good. Good moisture followed by good corn growing weather leads to good looking corn. But I've also seen a fair amount that is in wet areas or sandy areas that is very yellow and stunted. Given that week of rainy weather in May, we are looking at the very real possibility that we lost up to a third of our nitrogen to various pathways of loss. Even if your corn is looking good right now, I'd be figuring out a way to get 40 to 60 pounds of nitrogen side-dressed in the coming few weeks, maybe more in areas that are looking pale or yellowish.

I want to wind up this week's segment with just a quick thought on harvest aids in wheat. I've been out in quite a few wheat fields in recent days and have not seen very many weeds coming along. This is a bit of a surprise as I really expected to see problems after all that rain in

April. Harvest is coming up on us really fast and most of the harvest aids are going to have a week to two weeks waiting period after application until harvest. At this point in time, I really think that unless you have a bad weed problem poking it's head up above the crop, that you just not worry about harvest aids and focus on getting ready to get the wheat out once it is ready.

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