

Wheat is Jointing, Cold Weather Impacts?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Well, we knew it was coming - after all, it is still just March and the average last frost isn't until April 15th AND the frost free date isn't until about May 10th, so we knew we'd have some frosty weather again! The good news is, that while the wheat is jointing, most of it is in early enough stages that it still has a lot of cold weather tolerance. Once we start to get up into that rapid stem elongation phase, which given this week's forecast is going to happen SOON, then we start seeing cold weather tolerance wane in a hurry, but we'll cross that frosty bridge when we come to it. So other than a few frosted leaves on the wheat I don't think we had any damage to speak of. But if you have been grazing your wheat, and you want a grain crop to harvest, you'd better have been pulling cattle off as of last week! So what about the alfalfa and more importantly, the alfalfa weevils. Well, alfalfa weevils essentially don't freeze. As the weather get's cooler, either in the evening or when a weather front passes, they simply move down the stem of the plant and burrow into the debris at the base of the alfalfa plant. When the weather warms back up, they move back up and start feeding. The only time that I've seen cold weather have an impact was in early April of 2007 when we had similar weather and then it got down to 17 degrees on Easter morning. The alfalfa froze back to the ground and the alfalfa weevil essentially starved to death. I don't know about you, but I'd prefer to not repeat that scenario! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Smoke Management

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been pleased to see some folks taking advantage of good weather so far this month and doing some burning. But in all honesty, we probably haven't burned enough yet. Much of the burning that we do is for cedar control and to remove growth from the past couple of years. For these reasons, you can burn anytime in the late winter and spring, you do not have to wait until April. The warmer the weather when you burn, the greater the likelihood of creating ozone issues at some air quality monitor somewhere. For anyone anywhere in Kansas doing prescribed spring burning, start by visiting ksfire.org. From here you can visit the online smoke modeling page so you can see first of all if there is a risk of your fire impacting nearby communities AND even plug your information in and see where your smoke might go over the next day. If Geary county shows up red on the map, you're probably best off not burning. Okay, next, you need to get permission from the local authorities to burn. In Geary County that means calling the Emergency Management office at 238-1290. If you get the recording just follow the directions to get to a live person. Remember, in Geary County you need to have enough manpower and equipment to handle the size of fire you are conducting. And perhaps the first thing that I should have stated was, make sure you have a reason to burn. We call these prescribed burns. Part of that prescription is a reason. Cow calf herds don't show an improvement in performance from burning. Make sure you know why you are burning your pastures! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Starter Fertilizer Placement in Corn

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Corn, perhaps more so than any other crop we grow, can have a very strong and favorable response to starter fertilizer. The reason for this is quite simple - cold soils. Cold soils are going to cause phosphorus uptake to be slower than normal and therefore phosphorus deficiency is going to be more noticeable. Much of this goes back to soil phosphorus levels. Generally we say that response to applied phosphorus becomes very questionable as soil phosphorus levels move over 20 ppm. With corn, I may consider starter fertilizer at soil test levels of even 25 or 30. The next consideration is how do you apply it. With starter fertilizer we are generally looking at three choices: in furrow, 2 x 2 band or a surface band. Our big concern with in furrow is the amount of nitrogen plus potassium. Both N and K are salt based and rates over about 8 pounds combined N + K can start to show stand reduction. Phosphorus is not a salt so it has no limits. A series of tests was performed looking at in-furrow, 2 x 2 and surface band starter fertilizer at rates of 5-15-5 (5 pounds N, 15 pounds P and 5 pounds K) as well as 15-15-5, 30-15-5, 45-15-5 and 60-15-5. Starter fertilizer, even at the lowest rates caused significant yield increase. But at all levels 2x2 placement and surface band were very similar and both far outpaced in furrow simply because of stand loss. In the heaviest nitrogen level, there was a 20% reduction in population. 2 x 2 and surface band had a final population of 25,000 and in furrow was at 20,000. So, if you want to apply a lot of N as starter, don't put it in furrow. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.