

### Severe Storm Awareness

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This week is severe weather awareness week in Kansas. It would seem that given where we live we wouldn't need to remind folks of the fact that we can have severe weather, but it never ceases to amaze me at how many local residents don't really understand thunderstorms, tornadoes and severe weather. Granted, we have a lot of new residents in our area every spring, but even long time Kansas residents are still painfully unaware of the risk of severe weather. To help remedy this issue, there is a public meeting tomorrow night on severe storm safety and information at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Building on Spring Valley Rd starting at 7 p.m. It will last 90 minutes to 2 hours and is free. It is hosted by the Geary County Emergency Management Services Office and presented by the National Weather Service. I try to attend every year as it is a good refresher activity and you also learn about the newest discoveries of severe storms. And yes, we keep learning every year. Severe storm safety really comes down to awareness of when conditions are right that storms may happen, having a way to be informed of rapidly changing conditions and then having a plan. There are now many apps for smart phones that can alert you to watches and warnings. Additionally, and I encourage all households to have one of these, weather alert radios. These are programmable and will alert you when watches and warnings have been issued for your area. Please come to tomorrow night's meeting and stay aware. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## SCA Resistant Hybrids

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know a lot of producers are ready to just write off grain sorghum as a viable crop option because of all the insect issues the past couple of years, but I honestly think that this would be a mistake. We have a lot of new developments in the pipeline for sorghum and the whole sugar cane aphid situation is manageable. By the way, it is generally felt that while we did have a lot of sugar cane aphid issues last year, at least half of the loss of yield likely came from other insect pests that we simply overlooked, or intriguingly enough, the natural predators ignored because there was such a glut of sugar cane aphids to feed on they ignored many of the other pests. Lady beetles and other beneficial insects are always in fields and historically have fed on a whole host of sorghum insect pests including corn leaf aphids, greenbugs even false chinch bugs and lygus bugs. In many cases, especially the last two, the beneficials were scouring leaves and eating the eggs of these pests before they could even hatch. Last year, with the abundance of sugar cane aphids to feed on, the beneficials didn't waste time going after traditional food species because it was easier to feed on sugar cane aphids. A lot of the head sterility seen in fields with low sugar cane aphid populations likely came from false chinch bugs and lygus bugs. Over the last couple of years there are several hybrids that have been noted for having better tolerance, perhaps resistance, to sugar cane aphids. I have a list at the Extension Office I can share. Not all hybrids are suited to Kansas, but you can find at least some that are. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Alfalfa Weevil

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It probably is no surprise that alfalfa weevil eggs started hatching the last week of February. Given when the earliest eggs were laid and how few growing degree days are needed to get these eggs to hatch, I'm just surprised that they weren't hatching earlier. Naturally, this is just the start of the hatching season and is far too early to start spraying. We had an unusual situation last fall that eggs laid in the early fall were actually hatching in November and December. This has never been documented before. While alfalfa weevil larvae have good cold tolerance, we don't think that they survived the winter so the larvae we are finding now are new hatches. There has been a lot of interest in fall treatments in recent years and I know several of you have even tried it. What the entomologists have found is that while properly timed fall treatments can reduce the number of spring weevils, they have never reduced it to the point that a spring treatment wasn't needed. It may delay when you have to spray but not eliminate the need to spray. So if you sprayed last fall, don't think you don't have to monitor for weevils. To help out with aphid issues we also need to start using weevil control products that are less damaging to beneficial insects. Steward is probably the best. Speaking of spraying, there has yet to be documentation of resistance. Many claims have been made, none substantiated. The biggest problems are spraying with too little water and spraying when it is too cold. It needs to be sunny with temperatures above 55 and you need to be using at least 15 gallons per acre. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Hessian Fly

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 getting out into wheat fields over the past couple of weeks - nice excuse on some of these crazy warm days to get out of the office. Several things that I noticed in the fields that I have been in. The wheat is really starting to grow. I was seeing very good root development in all fields. What I was noticing last fall in fields with variable growth was the areas that appeared to be not growing as well had significantly more compaction than areas that were growing better. Poor fall growth often comes down to compaction, or poor seed placement, especially in no till fields. The most advanced wheat I could find recently was in the very early stage of what we used to call jointing which is when that tiny little head moves above ground and starts moving up through the stem. Only difference is that now days we refer to this as first hollow stem which occurs just before the official jointing. This stage can be important if producers are grazing wheat but don't want to harm grain production. If cattle are moved off the fields at first hollow stem, then that will occur just before the plant starts to joint, and you won't damage the earliest heads. If you are grazing wheat, monitor this close. The other thing I found that concerned me was Hessian fly flax seeds in 5 to 10% of the stems in fields I was in. There's really nothing we can do for Hessian fly unfortunately. Fly free dates have been pretty well shown to be ineffective, you can't spray, about all you can do is plant in mid-October and hope, or use resistant varieties which are few and far between. Fly damaged plants will lodge more. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pasture Rent Survey

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know that more than a few of you are always calling me up wanting to know the going rate is for bluestem pasture. I probably get 2 or 3 dozen calls a year. And many times, when I tell you what's in the survey, I often get a few comments of, "oh that's not right." Well, it is right, given the information that it is based on. Here's what you need to keep in mind. It seems that everyone wants to know the going cash rates but no one wants to tell. We had a saying in my statistical analysis methods class in college - garbage in, garbage out. In recent years, especially as the K-State Ag Econ department has taken over trying to produce this annual report, because the Kansas Ag Statistics had to drop it due to budget cuts, it has been harder and harder for them to collect enough information that it could be of value. The bottom line is that these good folks need your information. This information is anonymous. The survey may sound long at four pages, but you only fill in the blanks that pertain to you! For most folks it is going to take less than ten minutes to fill it out. Leah Tsoodle, director of the ag land use survey center has provided me with a stack of the survey forms and would really like tenants or landlords, either one, to get these filled out. If you call me up I'll mail you one. If you stop by the office, you can fill it out, put it in an envelope and I'll never see it. Once I get a bunch of them collected I'll mail them to Leah. I'd love to get 20 or 30 or more of these forms filled out and back to Leah. Please take the time to stop in the office and fill one out next time your in town. Thank you! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.