

Weevil Update

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I probably shouldn't even be talking about this, but I think a lot of our alfalfa fields are going to get by with one treatment of insecticide for alfalfa weevils. I'm sure there may be one or two fields that need another treatment OR we may all of a sudden have some late issues pop up. But at this time it's looking like we are through spraying for weevil for this year, UNLESS we have to treat for adults after 1st cutting. So why, after several consecutive years of multiple treatments, are we getting off so easy, or so it seems? For starters, I think we had enough warm weather early that we were able to get a majority of the eggs hatched in a very tight window. Remember, February was nearly 12 degrees above average and I think that this helped spring laid eggs hatch not that much later than fall laid eggs. Then we had enough cool spells to slow down development. Secondly I think applicators, either commercial or farmer applicators are doing a better job of heeding the need to apply lots of water, perhaps a little higher pressure and then applying on warm sunny days. Quite likely we had more days suitable for proper treating. We may also have had a few more people using the newer products that can give a little longer control. Now, adults are emerging and they will likely stay in the fields until first cutting or the temperatures move up above 80 for several days in a row. There is some disagreement on effectiveness of treating for adults so let's just monitor this for now! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat Freeze Damage?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. At least once a spring we will have a weather event come along that causes me to pull out that 35 year old bulletin on spring freeze injury to wheat. Such an event occurred last Thursday morning. Temperatures out about the county ranged from lows of 34 down to about 29, possibly lower. Wheat that is in boot can start to see damage with temperatures at 28 degrees for at least two hours. If it's headed we're looking at 30 degrees for two hours. Now, that is when damage starts. So did we see some damage from last Thursday's cold morning? Probably but I honestly think it will be quite nominal. I think we were right on the edge of damaging temperatures and we were right on the edge of being there for a long enough period of time. Some of the preliminary maps I've seen of temperatures and duration of freezing temps really have western Geary on the line and rapidly moving out of it as we go east across the county. The damage from this kind of freeze is not going to be the smelling like silage a week later, but the very subtle head sterilization or partial sterilization that you may not see for several more weeks. Damage is more likely going to be seen in creek bottom fields than up on hills. I'll be out later this week checking fields for any evidence of possible problems. With the good growing conditions I would expect secondary heads and tillers to pick up much of the slack from any frost damage and impact should be rather nominal. But this is wheat and mother nature so it's often hard to tell. If you have fields you are concerned about, give me a call and we'll take a look! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat Leaf Disease Update

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Are you ready for it? You know it's coming, in fact it's probably already here! Think back to the weather a week ago Monday - strong winds blew most of the day out of the south. It was warm and I'm willing to bet that leaf and stripe rust spores blew all the way north to Nebraska, so the spores are here. Now we've had some rain and some more rain and those spores are probably getting started. Cooler weather will favor stripe rust, warmer weather will favor leaf rust. Fortunately the same fungicides will control both diseases equally well. So do you treat for diseases on a crop you may well already be losing money on or just turn your back and let it go? I think you have to go back to some of those same criteria we have long been using. Do you have good yield potential? I would say that if the crop looks like it can make 40 bushels per acre or better, then it's worth spraying. Next, how susceptible to stripe and leaf rust are the varieties you have planted? If you are calling me up to ask if you should spray, please make sure you know what varieties you have planted because I'm going to look at our charts for disease response ratings. For maximum effect we need to have the flag leaf fully emerged. Wheat can be headed out, but depending on the fungicide you use, the latest you can apply is flowering and then you may still have a 30 day waiting period. Others you can't apply once they start to flower. And then ultimately, can you get a plane or a ground based spray rig into the field in time. It's not a simple decision, but you need to start getting ready to make it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Soybean Seeding Rates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When you plant your soybeans, what seeding rate do you shoot for? If you go back 30 years I don't think it was uncommon to find most people planting 180,000 seeds per acre. Most of the time these were bin run beans maybe one year from certification and cost for the seed was low. Those days are pretty well gone now and suddenly, when you're paying top dollar for seed every year, you don't want to drop any more than you have to! Studies years ago showed that yields often started plateauing out once you hit 45,000 plants per acre. The problem was that rates that low resulted in bottom pods almost too low to get into the combines. Which leaves us with a range of somewhere between 45,000 and 160,000 plants per acre. What we have found over the past ten years or so is that optimum seeding rate is a moving target based on yield potential in that particular field with the higher the potential yield, the more plants you want, up to a certain limit. In low yield environments, yields under 40 bushels per acre, you should probably be looking at plant populations of 70, to 80,000. In most cases, figure 80% emergence and stand establishment so 80 to 100,000 seeds per acre. Under higher yield environments, think over 40 bushels per acre, then ideal populations went up to 105,000 to 120,000 plants per acre. In these studies plant populations were pushed up to 160,000 per acre or more, but yield increases simply weren't found. Short final answer - in lower yielding environments, shoot for 75,000 plants, under better conditions kick that up to about 110,000.

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Do narrow rows in soybeans yield more?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was talking to someone the other day and he remembered when his dad switched from 36 inch rows to 30. Boy, that was a radical change and I can remember my own father making that change. So now days the debate, at least in soybean production, is whether we go with 30 inch rows or 15. On farm yield trials over the past couple of years have looked at that very question where the same varieties were planted the same day at the same population but half in 30 inch rows and the other half in 15. These were large plot, on farm, replicated studies. In the end, across all studies, 15 inch rows yield 2 bushels per acre more than 30 inch rows. The range across the four studies was from -.6 bushels per acre to plus 4 bushels per acre. Here are some things to consider. Poor stands were more common with narrow rows. This is likely because narrow rows are often drilled, where the 30 inch rows were seeded with a planter. I can guarantee that there is a difference between drills and planters. Narrow row beans do have some advantages that have nothing to do with yield, or at least directly. Narrow rows provide better erosion control. Narrow rows canopy over quicker, to help reduce weed competition and they provide better light capture. One caveat is that in lower yielding environments, being yield potentials under about 45 bushels per acre, this yield advantage seems to disappear. I would like to see this study repeated where true planters were used in both row spacings. But for the time being, it may very well be a toss up over which is better, so do what you like! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.