

### Dealing With Crown Vetch

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Crown Vetch is a non native perennial legume that was introduced across much of the state as a roadside plant used to hold the soil in place and to control erosion. While it has worked very well for that, it has also gotten out of hand. In my mind, it should probably be a noxious weed, but then that would mean that state and local government would have to control it on the roadsides. The problem is that crown vetch spreads, readily, both by seed and more importantly by rhizomes growing underground that can grow up to 10 feet long. As such, we routinely see it moving into pastures where it can literally smother out all other plant growth. Prescribed burning will slow it down but not stop it. Repeated mowing can slow it down, even grazing or hand pulling can slow it down. But all will achieve less than 50% long term control. Effective long term control is going to require herbicides. Many of our brush control herbicides have pretty good effectiveness. Escort, dicamba, remedy, crossbow, and Garlon are going to give pretty good control, but because of seed in the soil, multiple years of treatments are going to be required. There is another group of herbicides that are going to have exceptional control and good residual control. Aminopyralid, known as milestone, clopyralid, available under several names, and Tordon are going to be very good. Milestone is probably my product of choice for this plant. Spot spray in the late spring after full leaf but before it starts to bloom. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Patience on the Road, Please!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Spring field work is getting a late start. It's been trying to get going in fits and starts but one of these days it's going to turn nice and stay nice and there'll be farm equipment all over the place. What that means is that all of you out there listening, that don't have anything to do with agriculture, are likely to encounter some of that farm equipment out on the roadways. More than likely you're going to be running late or think you're running late. You were already bumping up over the speed limit and now there's this darn piece of agriculture equipment rolling along at 20 mph down the highway. Here's what you need to do - chill out! If in fact you are running late, I'm willing to bet that the tractor isn't at fault - you probably didn't start your drive soon enough. Here's a few things to keep in mind - the tractor has a legal right to be there. The person driving the tractor isn't any happier to be there than you are to have him there. He or she wants off that highway just as soon as possible. If traffic is backing up, they will pull over and let it by, when it is safe to do so. That tractor and any equipment that may be attached to it needs room to safely maneuver so just back off and give it room. Don't try to pass in a no passing zone. It's illegal and unsafe. Remember, they are on their job as well and trying to make a living as well. And just for a comparison, take time to figure out how much time you spend waiting at stop lights every day. Be patient, be calm and for gosh sakes, be safe! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Why don't we fertilize native grass?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When it comes to hay meadows or grazing paddocks we talk about fertilizing bromegrass or fescue or sometimes even bermudagrass, but we don't talk about fertilizing native grass. This sometimes confuses new property owners that have just acquired a 20 acre parcel out in the country but also some long time pasture owners. Why don't we fertilize our native grasses? Some people think we don't do it because they won't respond to fertilization. On the contrary, they do respond to fertilization. You know that big yield bump we see on native prairies the year following a drought when we get good rains? It has far more to do with the naturally available nitrogen that wasn't used the previous year when we didn't have the rain. Our native grasses and plants evolved to survive on very low levels of nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus. But when we fertilize them, they will respond. The problem is, and this is why we don't fertilize them, they don't respond nearly as well as the plants we don't want in the pastures. Weedy plants and less desirable grasses, like bromegrass, bluegrass and winter annual bromes like cheat, will grab that fertilizer and do a lot more with it. We will see a jump in pounds of dry matter produced, but it isn't from the desirable plants and the quality suffers. In essence, biologically it isn't a sound practice, and more importantly, economically it isn't a sound practice because the value of the increase in yield in forage, is usually less than the cost of the fertilizer applied. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pea Aphids in Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We spend a lot of time talking about alfalfa weevil and tend to forget some of the other pests. In addition to alfalfa weevil as an early spring pest we can also see problems with the blue alfalfa aphid, not common, and pea aphids, which can be very common. Since we so often have to spray for alfalfa weevils and since most of our weevil sprays are also going to control pea aphids, we rarely think about them. But what I can tell you is that there is rarely a time that I'm in an alfalfa field using a sweep net to get a count on weevil larvae that I don't also end up with a sweep net full of aphids. But since aphids are sucking juices out of the plant, which tends to stunt the plant but hard to see as you drive by on the road, as opposed to weevil larvae that eat up leaves causing alfalfa to turn white, which is very visible from the road, producers don't seem to get too excited about aphids. You need to be on the lookout for both. Pea aphids can build up in populations before weevil larvae do so when you're out scouting for weevil, be on the lookout for aphids as well. As to the subject of weevil and spraying for them. We've still got some folks that have been jumping the gun. Even with alfalfa priced where it is, you still need to let weevil eggs hatch and get the larvae up on the plant before you treat. Even short alfalfa, say 6 inches tall, you need to have close to one larvae per stem before you spray. If you spray too early you will have to spray again. Time that spraying so only one is needed! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Weed Control in Sorghum

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know - nobody likes growing sorghum but I think we need to reconsider it as a rotational option before we write it off for good. In spite of the improvements made to corn for drought tolerance, sorghum still has an advantage, One thing that we don't have in sorghum is glyphosate tolerance so we have to be more prudent and timely in our preplant/pre-emerge herbicide applications and any post-emerge applications we make as well. Weed control in sorghum really has to be focused on preplant burndown and soil applied residuals. In no-till, that preplant burndown needs to be a multi-pronged or perhaps better stated, multi modes of action approach. It can't be just glyphosate, especially in sorghum as we are planting later in the season and we are more likely to encounter various pigweeds, likely glyphosate resistant. If you know you've had pigweed issues in a field, consider doing an early treatment with a residual to help control pigweeds early and then a second residual application nearer to planting time. By going in early with some of these products we have more herbicides that can be used. Now, here's the challenge we may be facing this year - getting enough precipitation to get many of our residual herbicides activated. This will be even more crucial in sorghum where we don't have any truly effective post emerge grass control products. Atrazine and Facet L have grass activity and can control grass seedlings, but not 6 inches tall and growing fast grass. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.