

Late Summer Brome Fertilization

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This year we saw a lot of brome grass that was fertilized that never seemed to respond to any of that fertilization. When I talked with the producers nearly everyone acknowledged that it wasn't fertilized until March. Which in my mind is too late anyway but especially this year as we had less than two inches of rain in March and April. We probably had just enough rain to take the fertilizer into the soil surface but not enough for that brome grass plant to do anything with it. So what has happened to that fertilizer? If we are getting some good rains should we try to fertilize more to get some fall grazing? What about fertilizing for next year's brome crop? So many questions that are into a new area for all of us! I'm hoping in the next couple of weeks to get out and get some profile soil tests pulled in a couple of brome fields to see what we do have out there. Regardless of how much carryover we have, I firmly feel that we need to be fertilizing those brome fields from mid-November through late December assuming the soil isn't frozen. The odds of getting some precipitation to take that fertilizer into the root zone is normally pretty good in that late fall early winter time frame. Even a 3 or 4 inch snow is going to grab on to that fertilizer and pull it into the root zone. And with cooler late season temperatures we have less volatilization risk. If the rains start coming in September and we are getting good growth we can get 30 to 40 pounds on yet this fall for some grazing. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Intensive Management Wheat Variety Trials

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week I teased you with a comment on yield trials under intensive management. For this purpose intensive management meant that the difference between standard and intensive was an extra 40 pounds of nitrogen and 2 fungicide applications. These trials were performed at 3 locations, Sumner, Ellsworth and McPherson. The three sets of trials had identical seeding rates and all other management was the same except for the extra fertilizer and fungicide applications. In all three locations there were the same 50 varieties from 14 companies. The Sumner county test had only 2 varieties lose yield when going to intensive management. Ellsworth only had 3 that lost yield but the McPherson location had 19 varieties that lost yield. Across all varieties at McPherson, intensive management increased yield only 0.9 bushels, in Sumner County 3 bushels but in Ellsworth the average was 6.9 bushels. The biggest yield loss in any of the tests was 4.5 bushels at the McPherson site. The biggest yield gain was at Ellsworth where a K-State experimental line increased yield over 17 bushels per acre. In fact there were 8 different varieties at Ellsworth that increase yield 10 bushels or more. What we don't know from this one table was if that was fungicide or just what. These three pages of tables are intriguing and make we want to hear the rest of the story. What was the cost of that extra nitrogen and 2 fungicide applications. So many questions that need answers. They've got our attention, but... This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dealing with Cactus

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I had a phone call the other day about dealing with cactus in pastures and hay meadows. While we have several different species of cactus that are native to the flint hills, the most common one that causes us problems is prickly pear cactus. These are the ones that have the flat pads. With the weather that we've had over the past 12 months cactus are going to be far more visible now than ever which will prompt a lot of landowners to want to spray now. The K-State weed control guide recommends treating prickly pear cactus before full bloom stage in May and June. But when I look at the information out of Texas for controlling prickly pear they say you can spray anytime throughout the year as long as the ground isn't frozen. There are two herbicides recommended by K-State - Tordon 22K or Surmount. Surmount has picloram, the same as Tordon, but it also has a second herbicide, Fluroxypyr. Texas primarily talks about Surmount. So take your pick. I'd always heard that it helps to use a potato fork or something to poke some holes in the pads, but neither K-State or Texas talk about that anymore. The key is to apply a thorough soaking of both sides of the prickly pear pads to moisten it well but not to the point of runoff. It is strongly recommended that you get a blue spray dye to make it easier to see where you are spraying and to also use a surfactant. Mix Surmount at 1% or 1 1/3 ounces per gallon plus 1/4% surfactant and 1/2% blue dye. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Nitrates still

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The number of forage samples that I have sent in for nitrates the past two months is probably more than I have sent in for the past 20 years combined. It is crazy and what is even crazier is how all over the board the results that have come back are. The biggest challenge right now isn't so much IF forages will have elevated nitrate levels. It's more a case of how do we deal with some of these levels. I've seen results come back from very low to toxicly high. The highest readings, in excess of 15,000 ppm nitrates, have been from samples of weeds growing in with the desired crop. The crops were often low enough to be usable but once you start getting those pigweeds or lambsquarter in with it the rates can go through the roof in a hurry. Corn has been high and low, various sorghums and sudans have been high and low. I've heard reports of brome grass being high but I haven't seen any samples yet that concerned me. But, given that ANY plant can accumulate dangerous levels of nitrates, I would advise randomly sampling any forage that you have harvested this year! To help in understanding this whole nitrate toxicity issue we have a meeting scheduled for September 5th, 7 p.m. in the evening at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Building at the Fairgrounds. I know some of you will already be feeding some of these feeds but that was the soonest that Beef Cattle Specialist Dale Blasi and I could get a date scheduled that worked for both of us, so be looking for more information on that in the near future! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Yucca Control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A couple of days ago I talked about controlling prickly pear and the natural follow up to that is yucca. Yucca is a native perennial shrub in the Agave family but unfortunately I don't think you can make tequila out of it. In well managed pastures you will normally just have scattered plants but in cases of overgrazing or adverse weather conditions it can become quite dense at over 2,000 plants per acre. It is resistant to drought and while fire will burn the top off of it, it won't really slow it down. I can tell you right now that we are past the preferred time for controlling this plant. Normally we want to treat it earlier in the growing season and the rule of thumb is a few weeks before or after blooming, but basically, anytime in May or June should work well. While K-State recommends Chaparral plus 2,4-D or Cimarron Plus and 2,4-D, I've found several other Great Plains states that recommend Remedy or generic triclopyr plus diesel fuel or vegetable oil. For the triclopyr plus diesel, mix 15% triclopyr plus 85% diesel fuel, Or 19 ounces of triclopyr plus 109 ounces of diesel fuel. It works best to add the triclopyr to the sprayer first and then the diesel fuel. Then you make a directed spray to the center of the whorl of the plant for at least 2 seconds. By directing the spray to the center of the whorl it allows the herbicide to be taken up by the meristematic tissue or growth point of the yucca plant. In control trials, using this method gave 100% control 2 months after treatment. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.