

Drought Stressed Corn Risks

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've spent a whole lot of time talking about nitrate risks in drought stressed corn harvested for forage because that was our main concern as we weren't going to get much if any grain crop off this corn that wasn't irrigated. Some dryland corn hung on and we'll be harvesting it soon. We also have all the irrigated corn that we'll be picking before long. Now we've had an amazing amount of rain in recent weeks which leads to some new problems to worry about; aflatoxin. Aflatoxin is a compound that is produced by *Aspergillus* ear mold. Not all *Aspergillus* molds produce aflatoxin. Often the mold colonies are dime to quarter sized, are greenish yellow and grow between the kernels. Rainfall when corn is drying down soaks the ends of the ears and this is where we usually find the *Aspergillus*. Had it stayed dry, we wouldn't be too worried about aflatoxins. Aflatoxins can be highly toxic to people and especially for cattle. It is an extreme concern in dairy cattle as even low levels can be passed through to the milk. Most elevators use a quick quantitative test to see if the level is above or below 100 parts per billion. 100 ppb seems to be the most commonly used threshold for acceptance or when the grower is docked or the shipment is refused. Unfortunately really high levels may not even be accepted by distillers for ethanol. There's nothing we can do except harvest as soon as possible and take steps to reduce kernel damage, then dry the corn quickly if keeping it on farm. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Basal Bark and Cut Stump Treatments

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. While foliar spraying of woody brushy species in pastures is a good way to control them, the same foliar spraying is not nearly as effective with trees, especially if they have a diameter of 4 inches or more. For these larger trees we really need to be looking at basal bark treatment or cutting and treating the stump and late summer, fall and winter are perfect times to do this. I prefer basal bark treatments for species that tend to resprout badly like honeylocust and hedge. Basal bark treatment consists of mixing generally triclopyr with kerosene or diesel as a 25% solution and then spraying the bottom 2 to 3 feet of trunk just to the point of runoff. Go all the way around the tree and don't miss any part of the stump. After the tree is dead, then you cut it down! If you want to do a cut stump treatment with honeylocust, the herbicide Milestone as a 10% solution in water has shown to be far more effective than triclopyr. While many people use Tordon RTU and Pathway for cut stump treatments in pastures, they aren't labeled for use in the pastures. Only non-cropland areas such as fence rows, roadsides and right of ways. Be advised though that Tordon 22K, 10% in water is labeled for pastures. Other products that work well include Crossbow, Remedy, Pathfinder, PastureGard HL, Milestone, Banvel or Clarity, Roundup PowerMAX and Arsenal. All have varying mix rates for cut stump treatment and some require mixing in diesel, mainly the triclopyr products, while others are mixed in water. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Managing High Nitrate Feeds

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We had a great meeting last Wednesday talking with Dale Blasi from K-State about high nitrate forages and how to use them in cattle herds. One thing that we didn't probably spend enough time on was talking about the cumulative effect of nitrates. We often talk about high nitrates in feed stuffs but don't spend enough time talking about nitrates in the livestock water. It doesn't matter what the source of nitrates is, they all add up and can be a problem, especially for pregnant cows and younger calves. If you use well water for your cattle, when was the last time you tested it for nitrates? Or maybe I should say, have you EVER tested it for nitrates. Last time we had a bad drought, we did a lot of well water testing and a surprising number had elevated nitrates. This time around there's a lot of rural residences on rural water systems. Any public water supply has to test regularly for nitrates and a host of other things. But are we using the rural water for livestock water or still relying on the well? IF you are using well water maybe it's time to get it tested. Farmstead wells often reside not too far from the cattle pens. Nitrates leach out of manure, down through the soil and into the groundwater aquifer. Droughts cause soil to shrink away from the well casing and all sorts of stuff get's washed down by rain showers before the soil firms back up. Or worse yet, an old hand dug well is being used and everything washes down in that open shaft. Just like the forages, we can't leave this to chance. Test it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Getting through the fall and winter with limited forages

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the things that Dale Blasi talked about at our meeting last week was how to get through fall and winter with limited forage. Okay, we all get a little bit lazy sometimes and want to use just one food source in the fall. But what Dale was pointing out was that we can use a lot of those higher nitrate feeds by just using less of them and blending them with grains, prairie hay and even wheat straw. Our biggest concern, now that it's started to rain, isn't what we are going to feed the cattle for the next month or so, but what happens if it turns off cold and snowy. For the near term we have new growth in the pastures. We have good fall growth on brome, more on that tomorrow. With this moisture we can get fall cereals planted early and get some good grazing likely up to Thanksgiving. But what happens from December through April, especially if it snows? For starters, tighten up management. Cull non and poor producing cows. Wean early. Feed cows according to body condition and put some extra flesh on them now when they are easy keeping. Give them a couple pounds of grain a day to replace some of the forage without messing up their rumen. It's a good way to put on some body condition. But also get your forages tested and inventoried. Know what you've got and how much of each nitrate level you have so you know how to blend them. Higher nitrate forages go to yearlings and backgrounders. Lower nitrate goes to bred cows. It's time to crank up the management. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Using Fall Bromegrass

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Remember all that fertilizer you applied to your bromegrass late last winter that you were complaining didn't do any good? Have you looked at your bromegrass since all this rain? Guess what. The bromegrass is using it now! I've seen growth on these brome fields in excess of one foot already. That stuff is really growing and it's going to continue to grow which then begs the question, can we utilize that stuff this fall. Well, yes, but we walk a fine line. You can mow it now because we'll have time for it to regrow and build up root reserves. If you don't mow it in the next week, wait until early November. It won't try to regrow much at that time so mowing it off won't threaten root reserves. Or, you can flash graze it right now. Stock it a little light and don't let them take it down lower than 5 or 6 inches. Or just stockpile it and turn the cows out into it in late October or early November. Again, at that time, you likely won't impact root reserves. What about fertilization? Right now it's growing on last springs fertilizer applications. If you didn't fertilize it at all last year, hit it now with 30 or 40 pounds of nitrogen. Regardless, I would follow up between Thanksgiving and Christmas with a full load of nitrogen, meaning 60 to 80 pounds, plus 20 pounds of phosphorus and 15 pounds of sulfur. We've got a good chance this fall to get that bromegrass set up for a really decent hay crop. The plant is growing good and will continue to do so. Let's use all this moisture to our advantage! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.