Miracle Products Usually Aren't

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One thing that never seems to go away in agriculture is the miracle products. The general premise is that you apply literally no more than ounces per acre of some product and it's going to amazingly increase yields, reduce the amount of fertilizer you use, eliminate insect or weed pests, well, just about name it. Often the price per acre isn't much, less than $5 per acre. It is expensive on a per weight basis of what you are buying, but you don't need much per acre at all! Here's the short version - if it's being sold to increase yields or reduce fertilizer requirement and it just sounds too darn good to be true, it probably isn't true. They may even attempt to quote so called university research at which point they'll pull out one report from one study from one university that showed a yield increase or cost savings. But they won't be able to tell you anything else about the study. I recently saw an ad for a product that was 70% humic acid that you applied at 75 to 500 pounds per acre that was going to increase soil organic matter by an amazing ½% which would be a big deal. Well, those application rates would increase soil organic matter but by only a few thousandths of a percent. To truly increase soil organic matter by one half percent it would need over 13,000 pounds per acre of the product applied. A lot of these products will be out in force at state fairs and ag shows. Be suspect of anything that sounds too good to be true. Take their literature and bring it to me and I can tell you why not to use it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Nitrates still a concern

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. First of all, don't forget the high nitrate feed management meeting, tomorrow, Wednesday, September 5th, 7 p.m. at the 4-H Building at the Geary County Fairgrounds. The number of forage samples that are coming in to the Extension Office for us to send to the lab is amazing and to me a very good sign. Yes, we have roughly a third that are high enough that we need some special handling and another 20% that may be best fed to non-pregnant cattle, but the fact that over 80 forage samples have been brought in for testing is very encouraging. I've had a lot of producers asking me about bromegrass testing high for nitrates and wondering if that is possible. Well, it's possible for any plant to be high in nitrates. Some species of plants are more prone to it than others but literally any plant could have an issue. Early on all I had heard was hearsay - essentially the same rumors that everyone else must have been hearing. We've now sent in four bromegrass samples, and I'd like to send in more, so please bring in some more samples. The samples that we've sent in have not been a problem. Keeping in mind that forages with less than 3,000 ppm are safe to feed nearly anything, the four bromegrass samples have ranged from 237 to 1580 ppm. All well within the safe threshold levels. But I've found that rumors often have a little bit of truth in there some place so please bring me more samples of brome hay. Also remember, we have bale probes for you to borrow at the office. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall Cereal Crops for Grazing

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A practice that is more commonly used in south central Kansas and across Oklahoma should be seriously looked at this fall given the shortage of forage that we are dealing with. That practice is fall grazing of wheat or other cereal grains like rye, triticale, barley or oats. Any of these can provide a surprising amount of forage if planted in September. While rye is often cited as being the heaviest forage producing fall cereal, it just makes me nervous to plant it due to getting feral rye going in wheat fields. Oats are generally the lowest forage producer, often just half of the others. Which generally leaves us wheat, triticale and barley for serious consideration. It may be hard to get barley seed, in fact triticale seed will likely be easier to get in much of our area. Based on yield trials out of Oklahoma State there are differences in yield between the various triticale cultivars but perhaps not enough to worry about. There's also big differences in the wheat cultivars for forage production. Zenda has shown good fall grazing potential and does have intermediate resistance to Hessian fly. Other good forage producers include AgriPro Bob Done and SY Monument as well as West Bred WB415. A couple of things to keep in mind is that if you want to graze, you need to take advantage of some of the moisture we've gotten recently and get it planted around September 20th, triticale could be planted earlier. Sow it at a slightly heavier rate than normal and fertilize to encourage good early growth. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat Fertilization Plans

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 seeing a lot of wheat stubble fields that have been sprayed in preparation for wheat planting I'm sure. I've also seen some fields tilled, to deal with some big weeds, also in preparation for wheat planting. A couple of weeks ago I was talking about wheat fertility plans and since then I've seen a few soil test results come back. My recommendation to you, is get a soil test! I talked last week about wheat going into a corn field that had over 100 pounds of residual nitrogen that the failed corn crop didn't use. How much residual nitrogen is in a wheat on wheat field is going to be harder to say. If you harvested a decent wheat crop (as in 50 bushels or more) there probably isn't a lot of residual nitrogen but I could be wrong on that too. I just really feel this year, more so than in most years, that we need to be testing virtually every field out there, well, with the exception of fields going to beans. If you've got 70 pounds or more of residual nitrogen in a wheat field I seriously don't think we can justify putting more nitrogen on it. Save the dollars! If you don't want to save 15 or 20 or 25 dollars an acre then don't spend the $15 per field that a soil test is going to cost you! On the other, if you assumed that there was going to be residual nitrogen there, and there was not, how much yield might you have just cost yourself? Taking even an 18 or 24 inch profile soil test is going to take less than an hour of your time and a little sweat equity. This year it could really be worth it! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Soybean Insects

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There's been quite a few soybean fields sprayed for insects in the past ten days and I question how much of it is really necessary. Green cloverworms are succumbing to the fungal disease like they do every year. Podworms have been doing some feeding but if all you're seeing are small pods on the ground, they may have been aborted by the plant for lack of pollination as much as being chewed off by caterpillars. Podworms are more inclined to eat into the side of pod to get to the bean. Holes in leaves don't bother me at all because the damage always looks far worse than it really is. Dectes stem borer can eat off trifoliate leaves low on the plant. That's about the only clue you'll have right now that they are out there unless you start splitting stems. The real clue that you have stem borer will come at harvest time when you see the lodging. You can't stop stem borers, but you can try to get fields that are heavily infested harvest first so you don't lose as much to lodging. The one insect that concerns me more than any others right now is stink bugs. Stink bugs are those bugs that are green and shield shaped when they are adults but not nearly as shield shaped and black, white and a little orange as a juvenile. There's been a lot of juvenile stink bugs in fields and they will continue to feed on soybeans until the beans get full size and start to harden. If you aren't sure what you've got in your fields, give me a call and I'll come out so we can scout your field together! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.