

Blue-green Algae Risk

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In recent years we've heard a lot about blue green algae, which isn't really an algae at all, but anyway - it is found in all surface waters in Kansas. With all the rain this year we haven't heard much but with drier and hotter temperatures we'll likely start to see bluegreen algae blooms and some could be in pasture ponds. Hazardous algal blooms are real and they can hurt livestock. I've been asked to look at a lot of ponds in the past because of growth and they very rarely turn out to be blue-green algae. It's filamentous algae or pond weed or something like that. If cattle get sick, that's an obvious sign of problems. If the surface of your pond takes on an oily appearance and smells really bad, those aren't good signs and certainly call me. And avoid contact with the pond water in the meantime. Better to be cautious, than sick! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Control Volunteer Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Wheat harvest was late this year and most fields were rained on several times as they matured. As often is the case, there's always a lot of kernels that go out of the back of the combine. Even though these kernels are small, they'll still sprout and grow. Given the ongoing damp weather and good soil moisture conditions we are likely to see a lot of volunteer wheat this year. The best way to deal with volunteer wheat is to double crop soybeans after harvest and then spray it out with roundup. But that doesn't even always get all of it. And in fallow fields, well, they're turning green already. We need to control that volunteer wheat to reduce hessian fly, wheat streak mosaic and other insect and disease pests. That wheat really needs to be dead, dead, not just sprayed, two weeks prior to wheat planting in adjacent fields. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Japanese Beetles

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Japanese Beetles are an emerging crop production threat in both corn and soybeans. With corn the biggest threat is early on in silking where they will eat the silks and hurt pollination. Most of our corn is past this growth stage. However, they will also feed on young soybean leaves and due to their gregarious feeding habit they can cause a lot of issues but often in a limited area. They are most commonly found on field edges. If you are finding heavy concentrations of Japanese beetle, which are about the size of your little fingernail with a green head and copper colored wing covers, we can spot treat those areas. They are actively feeding for about 4 to 6 weeks so this year damage is likely to occur from now through the middle of August. If you think that you are finding Japanese beetles let me know and we can talk about control! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Stink Bugs

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Stink bugs were often considered to be nothing more than a nuisance or novelty. We'd see them in truck loads of wheat but didn't consider them a problem other than on our tomatoes. Now we know better as we've been growing more corn and soybeans and seeing problems from stink bugs. Stink bugs will get on corn plants and stick their strong mouthpart through the husk and into a kernel to suck out the juices. They will do the same thing on soybean seed pods. They pierce the pod and go right into the developing bean and suck the life out of it. The individual seed dies or fails to develop and the feeding injury becomes an entry point for diseases. The challenge is in trying to determine treatment thresholds. In beans we talk about 10 per 30 foot of row. With corn it may be closer to 50% of plants with stink bugs present. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Prairie Hay

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Mid July to mid August is THE best time to put up prairie hay. This is the sweet spot between best quality and maximum yield. You can wait later into August, even September and get more tons of hay. But the quality is going to be very low plus late cuttings hurt the grass stand. Remember we want 6 to 8 weeks of good growth after cutting to restore carbohydrate reserves in the roots and crowns. Quality, meaning highest protein and lowest lignin occurs very early in the season. That's why cattle gain weight so fast in the first half of the pasture season. But yields of hay then will obviously be low. So we shoot for that mid July to mid August time frame. Once the grass plants start sending up seed stalks, hay quality drops like a rock. I've seen some prairie hay being swathed already and that's good! Make quality hay not quantity! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.