

Musk thistle rears its ugly head

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In the 1970s and 80s musk thistle, a noxious weed, was pretty bad in the northern flint hills. Then biological controls that were being released started to build up such that musk thistle hasn't been nearly as bad in recent years - that is until this year. I think in 2018, due to a dry fall and dry spring we didn't have a lot of plants and biological control fell off because of lack of food. But then it started raining last year and we likely had 2 to 3 years worth of seed sprout and boy has it done well this year.

Okay, we're heading past the peak of the musk thistle blooming. Still get out there and try to control them, but also make a mental note of where the worst spots were. Then make it a point to get out there in late October, November and early December and start spot treating those rosettes to get musk thistle back under control! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don't panic about the pasture weeds

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yes, there are a lot of what appear to be weeds out in pastures this year. I told you clear back in late February that was going to happen. I told you then and I'm telling you again, don't get all hopped up about getting out there to spray pasture. Spray woody brush, spray noxious weeds but for most of the rest of those "weeds" that are out there, ignore them and focus on good pasture management and proper stocking rates. In most cases weeds aren't the problem, but the symptom. If we manage our stocking rates so we don't overgraze so there's vegetation next spring to burn or just leave as cover for the pasture, we won't have nearly the level of weedy annual broadleaf and grassy plants. We had a perfect storm of factors that came together and now we'll just have to ride it out. Call me if you have specific questions. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Pre harvest weed control in wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We sometimes talk about pre-harvest weed control in wheat. Nearly every field I've seen has a few weeds this year but so far not to the level that we need to be spraying fields to facilitate harvest. As long as we can get harvest wrapped up in decent time I don't think we'll need to. BUT if you do have a field get away from you realize that most products labeled for wheat pre-harvest weed control simply take too long to act to do much good OR have too long of a waiting period. Both of these things need to be on your radar if you are contemplating pre-harvest control. There are two products that work quickly and have short harvest waiting intervals. Aim and Sharpen work quickly, usually within 3 days and only have a 3 day waiting interval. Also, whatever herbicide you use, check the label for usability of the wheat straw. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Not all thistles are bad

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Far too many people are of the opinion that if it looks like a thistle, it needs to be killed. In reality, we only have one thistle of the four that grow here regularly, musk thistle, that we really need to control. A couple of those thistles, namely wavyleaf and tall, are native to the flint hills . They are here every year, they don't spread like wildfire and crowd out other vegetation. They are also very important nectaring plants for butterflies and pollinators. IF a pasture is overgrazed and poorly managed, wavyleaf thistle can become more abundant, but this is the fault of the management, not the thistle. It's just taking advantage of an open opportunity. So yes, continue to control those musk thistles. The other thistles can just be ignored. If you are concerned about one of the other thistles, call me and we'll talk about the issue! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Too late to spray brush?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The sweet time for foliar treatment of woody brushy species is mid May through Mid June. This is when the plants have normally just hit full leaf stage so carbohydrate root reserves are at their lowest. It's also before we've had a lot of hot weather when the leaves develop a waxy cuticle leaf surface which decreases herbicide uptake and effectiveness. Normally after mid June I recommend shutting off foliar brush spraying. Two exceptions do exist. First of all, when we've had a cool wet spring, like this year, waxy leaf surfaces are slower to develop AND many brush species are still putting on a lot of new growth. I think we can go into mid July this year. The second exception is when you burned or mowed pastures earlier and we have new regrowth from the ground. In these cases, now is likely the best time to treat. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.