

### Webworms in Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Had a call from an alfalfa producer last week who had garden webworms in his alfalfa. Garden webworms are an occasional pest of both alfalfa and soybeans. There can be several generations per year and they can occasionally become numerous enough to require treatment. In this case the field was just starting to bloom and was about to be swathed. Swathing is normally a good option if you are within a few days of normal harvest time. The webworms will either die from lack of food or go ahead and pupate. But, if your field is still a couple of weeks away from the next harvest and you are noticing that 25 to 30% of the plants are getting pulled up in webbing, for which the insect is named then you'll likely need to treat. Most of the synthetic pyrethroids that we use for weevils will work very well on webworms too. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Potato Leafhoppers in Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Had some alfalfa stems brought in to me last week. Not surprisingly they had some leaf spots on them. We have several minor diseases that can cause leaf spots and usually aren't much to worry about. BUT these stems also had leaves showing potato leafhopper damage. Potato leafhoppers are small, 1/8 inch long, yellow-green, wedge shaped insects that hop off the plants as you walk through the field. Feeding injury shows up as a V-shaped yellowing of the leaf tips. The problem is that the feeding damage often stops the growth of the plant right there. We don't normally treat the alfalfa itself but go ahead and harvest it and then go in and treat the stubble once the bales are removed. Fortunately if we have to treat we usually only treat once. So if your alfalfa seems to have stopped growing, it may not be the heat causing it. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Mosquitoes

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A couple of weeks ago I talked about an abundance of mosquitoes, and it's gotten worse. Trapping in the area is turning up increasing numbers of the mosquito species that are more prone to carrying West Nile Virus and other pathogens. However, trying to control adult mosquitoes is actually quite ineffective for many reasons. Controlling breeding sites will yield better results but many of the smaller breeding sites have since dried up and the one's remaining are out of most of our control. When we get rains that will cause water to collect and last for a week or longer, you may want to initiate measures to control larval mosquitoes in those sites. Ultimately it comes down to personal protection with clothing, repellents or just avoiding being outside at certain times of the day. For more information, please contact me. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Get Ready for Alfalfa Planting

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Somehow or another it's the last full week of July and August starts next week. IF you are thinking about planting some alfalfa, you need to get started now. The most common new alfalfa planting failure is in not soil testing prior to planting and then having an acidic soil pH and/or phosphorus deficiency. Low phosphorus levels can be addressed after the stand is established. Low soil pH can not. It only takes about 30 minutes to go out and grab a soil test from a field you want to plant to alfalfa.

You don't need a profile sample here - in fact we only need 6 to 10 samples from the top 3 or 4 inches. Make sure that you are well away from any gravel roads as limestone dust from the road rock can impact pH levels in the first hundred feet or so. Lime, must be applied and incorporated prior to alfalfa planting so check it now! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## What Happens When You Remove Stubble

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We often look at wheat stubble as a nuisance because it's too heavy, or maybe a secondary crop as we bale it for bedding or whatever. When wheat stubble is removed from a field, either by burning or straw harvest, it will impact the soil in many ways. I'll be the first to suggest burning a stubble field IF you are thinking about planting alfalfa. But that stubble provides not only protection from erosion, but in organic matter IN the soil and nutrients that would normally break down and add back to the soil. When you burn the stubble, the nutrients don't stick around in the ash, most of them vaporize off. 5,000 pounds of wheat straw contain 27 pounds of nitrogen, 7.5 pounds of  $P_2O_5$ , 37.5 pounds of  $K_2O$  and 5 pounds of sulfur. I'm not saying that neither of these practices should be done, just know what the impact is and plan accordingly. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.