

Armyworms

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It looks like we may have a pretty good armyworm infestation occurring in southeast and north central Kansas this year. I haven't picked up large populations yet, but I'm on a heightened state of alertness! We most often find armyworms in wheat and brome grass. In wheat they are usually feeding on leaves but as the leaves start to dry down from disease or maturity the armyworms can move up to feed on awns or perhaps even start clipping heads. With brome grass they are primarily foliage feeders and I have seen them bad enough that they literally stripped all the foliage off of a brome field leaving nothing but stalks. Which really lowers feed value when you put up hay. Under normal conditions plants will manage to outgrow any damage. But if you get into a hot spot of activity, insecticidal treatments may be in order. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Alternative forages

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With flood damage to alfalfa and brome and the growing season getting shorter by the day, some producers are looking at alternative, or dare I say, emergency forages. What species can you plant that will provide good forage or hay in fairly short order? The sorghums and sudans can do a pretty good job of producing tons of forage although quality can be less than preferred. An annual grass that more and more producers are looking at that I feel has some potential is called teff. If you need some information on this one I have a couple of bulletins from Oklahoma State. Some may laugh but crabgrass is commonly used in parts of Kansas and can provide a lot of forage. Finally, to stretch hay supplies this winter, consider planting something like triticale in August and move cattle to it in late September or October for late grazing. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Nitrogen Loss

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've been having some interesting conversations with producers and extension specialists about nitrogen loss due to the weather conditions. What it comes down to is that anyone that tells you that they know what has happened, is kidding you or themselves or both. Ultimately it depends on what kind of nitrogen source was used. When it was applied and the weather and soil conditions since then. Fall applied ammonia is going to have reacted differently than spring applied ammonia. Ammonia is quite stable and doesn't become subject to loss until it has been converted to nitrate, which can happen rapidly given temperature and soil oxygen levels. If you have applied nitrogen to your fields you have lost some of it. How much you lost will depend on the factors I've just mentioned but will range from 5 to 50% of the total applied. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

White Heads in Wheat Fields

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Not being able to get into the fields very much has given some producers more time to look at their wheat fields and many are finding white heads. White heads can come from many sources. If you have large patches turning white, it's likely drowning out. A quick walk into the field will show this by the mud on your boots. Individual white plants or small patches of plants are likely going to be fusarium root rot or take-all. If it's root rot the base of the plants are often pinkish - with take all the bottom of the tillers will be shiny and black or dark brown. If it's just an individual head of one plant, grab it and pull straight up. If the head comes out of the sheath with little resistance and the bottom of the stem looks chewed on or rotten, it's wheat stem maggot. Finally, if just parts of heads are white it's probably hail or head scab. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don't Forget Sorghum

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Grain sorghum has almost become a bad word to some producers. Between chinch bugs, weeds and sugar cane aphids I know more than a few that would like to see it classified as a noxious weed. But here's the thing about grain sorghum - planting it in June you are far more likely to get a decent yield than if you still try to plant corn. No, weed control isn't as easy as it is with corn or soybeans. You're actually going to have to have a plan and put some money into some pre-emerge herbicides. But the thing to keep in mind is that planting grain sorghum in mid June you've got a lot better chance of making a 90 to 100 bushel crop compared to about a 40 or 50 bushel crop with corn. And, the grain sorghum is quite likely to reach maturity by first frost compared to an 80% down to a 50% of corn reaching black layer! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.