More Wheat Field Scouting

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One thing about the Extension Office being closed to the public and meetings be canceled is that it has made it easier for me to get out and look at a lot of wheat fields! By the middle of last week leaf damage from this freezes was becoming obvious as was some of the foliar burn from late nitrogen applications. But what I was really seeing in most wheat fields was some pretty good looking wheat that was growing well. I split a lot of stems and looked at a lot of developing heads and could not find evidence of freeze damage. Flag leaves are probably 10 to 14 days from coming out, maybe less depending on weather. At that time we'll need to make some decisions on fungicide applications. A lot of that will depend on disease pressure and yield potential. After harvest wheat was another story but that's a topic for next week. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Nutrients for Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For years soybeans were a secondary crop and were very rarely fertilized. They had nitrogen fixing bacteria and we always assumed that there was just enough phosphorus left over from the wheat starter fertilizer and we just didn't worry too much about it! Well, soybeans are no longer a secondary crop and we're planting them in heavy rotation. While we traditionally have plenty of potassium in our soils, soybean seeds are high in potassium and soil removal of potassium by soybeans is higher per bushel than any other crop. Phosphorus needs are also significant. Soybeans are sensitive to sulfur deficiencies, we've seen this in Geary County. And with many of our soils somewhat alkaline, iron chlorosis can be an issue. All of this is to say that as we grow more and more soybeans, we need to be running more soil tests! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Nitrogen Loss in Early Spring

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Every year corn producers apply a lot of nitrogen fertilizer generally as anhydrous ammonia in the fall or late winter but then wind up worrying about nitrogen loss especially if planting is delayed or we have odd weather. One of the things to remember is that ammonium applied in cold soils, soils under 50 degrees, is very stable. The nitrogen cannot be lost until it goes through nitrification. While the soil temperature has been bouncing around since early April, it's just now finally getting above 50 degrees and staying above 50 degrees. The likelihood of nitrogen loss so far is pretty low. Additionally, while we had above average precipitation in January, it hasn't been excessively wet to the point that we would have accelerated nitrogen loss so we should be in good shape. If you really want to know we could still soil test! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don’t Forget the Inoculant

This is Ag Outlook, I’m Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was talking a couple days ago about soybeans needing lots of nutrients and like all plants, number one on that list is nitrogen. How do soybeans get nitrogen, generally through nitrogen fixing bacteria in nodules on the roots. A 40 bushel soybean crop is going to need about 130 pounds of nitrogen. Soybeans not only depend on the nitrogen that is fixed in the nodules but also residual nitrogen in the soil pool. Nitrogen fertilizer application rarely shows in yield benefit and therefore it becomes very crucial that we ensure proper inoculation. Often we just assume that the bacteria are in the soil already. Although that strain of bacteria is not native to our soils if we’ve grown soybeans in the past couple years it probably is still present. Don’t take the risk. If your soybean seed isn’t pre-inoculated, add it at the planter box to be sure! I’m Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Alfalfa Insects

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Alfalfa insects. Yup, they've been out there. I imagine by now that quite a few fields have been sprayed and we've had some good warm calm days that were perfect for spraying. If you did spray your field, make sure you get back in there about 7 days after treatment to see how it's looking. We occasionally have control failures which are usually due to spraying on a cold cloudy day and with too little carrier. Some weevil larvae were killed by some of those cold snaps but plenty enough weren't. If you haven't been out in your field yet then definitely get out there checking that field. Remember, if you wait until you can see the damage from the road it is already too late. While some producers relent and just give the first cutting to the weevil, this is not advisable as first cutting is often the biggest cutting and the damage carries on all year. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.