

Gray Leaf Spot Scouting

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Periodic rains and high humidity in typical Kansas July heat will lead to leaf diseases in corn. The most crucial time is occurring right now with most of our corn past VT and at R1 - with some possibly making it to R2. Gray leaf spot is the disease that we know can hurt yield and can benefit from a fungicide application, but it has to be done now. The key is evaluating the ear leaf. If gray leaf spot is covering more than 5% of the ear leaf at R1 a fungicide will help especially for susceptible and intermediately resistant hybrids. If you are finding high infection rates, even at R2, fungicides will help. After that, especially as move towards August, treatments for gray leaf spot are likely too late. Make sure that lesions on the leaf have the sharp edged appearance, not wavy edges which would indicate bacterial streak. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Nutrients in Wheat Straw

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I don't know how many times in the 1980s and 90s I saw combines pull out of wheat fields and literally a match was flipped into the stubble. Fortunately that isn't done very often anymore but we still see wheat straw baled up after harvest. Both processes remove a very valuable resource, namely the nutrients in that wheat straw. It may be hard to visualize, but that dry old nasty wheat straw contains a lot of nutrients that would normally be cycled through as the residue decomposes. How much nutrients? Well, more than you would imagine. We can figure that 50 bushel wheat is going to leave 5,000 pounds of wheat straw or residue above ground. The residue contains 27 pounds of N, 7.5 pounds of P, 5 pounds of S and 37.5 pounds of potassium. Take some time to figure out the cost of the fertilizer to replace that! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

High Temperature Stress in Corn

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Okay, here's a headline buster - stress on crop plants can impact yield. Yeah, wow, big news. But what's interesting is that depending on the crop, stress at different times is going to have different impacts. A lot of our corn is silking and pollinating in the past ten days. We are fortunate that we had some good rains in that period and temperatures moderated a bit. Research has shown us that stress during the first week of flowering in corn can reduce yield 40 to 50%. Stress the second week of flowering can reduce yield 30 to 40%. How do you know if corn is stressed? Go out first thing in the morning. If leaves are rolling already an hour after sunup, there's stress. 70 to 80% of corn yield is determined at tassel and the first three weeks following. If we can make it another week, we're going to have a good crop! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Stress in Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Soybeans and corn develop very differently. Corn has one shot at setting grain - one ear and one tassel. Soybeans are a different beast. Stress during R1, the first week of flowering generally reduces bean yields no more than 8%. That's because soybeans have many flowers and lots of opportunity to produce more flowers and set more pods. As we get into the 2nd and 3rd and 4th week of flowering stress does start to mount up however. Stress the 4th week of flowering can reduce yields up to 36%. When you get into the 2nd to 4th week of seed filling, it can reduce yields up to 45% in soybeans. We know that July can be brutal so we try to get corn pollinating early in July and then get our beans blooming and seed filling on into August when things usually moderate. We're in the middle of all this so we'll have to wait and see. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Time to Make Hay

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Wheat is harvested, double crop beans are planted so other than getting ready for county fair if you have 4-Hers, now is the time to think about putting up prairie hay. There are several considerations for the timing of cutting prairie hay. First is hay quality and second is giving the grass plants time to restore root reserves before cold weather. Prairie hay quality is dictated by leaves. Stems and seed heads may give you tonnage, but their quality is, well, pretty low. For highest protein and hay quality you want to have a leaf to seed stalk ratio that favors the leaves which means make hay NOW! Native grasses start shutting down growth in early to mid September. We need six weeks of growth post harvest to restore those root carbohydrate reserves. Which means you need to be wrapping up haying by mid August at the latest! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.