

Soil Testing for Alfalfa and Brome

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You're in the middle of trying to get harvest completed and here's the county agent telling you that you need to soil test your brome grass and alfalfa fields! But you don't have to do it today. But sometime this fall I'd like to see a bunch of soil tests come in from established alfalfa and brome grass fields. Both of these important forage crops routinely suffer from poor yields caused by insufficient fertility and often poorly timed fertilizer applications. Let's try to get some of these issues corrected and that's going to best start with some good soil testing. A six inch sample is adequate for alfalfa but with brome I want to check nitrates as well as sulfur and chloride so let's try to get at least a 12 or 18 inch profile, if not a 24. I may be wrong, but I suspect you're going to be surprised at what these test turn up! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Soybean Cyst Nematode Sampling

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As we grow more and more soybeans we will find more and more soybean production problems showing up. It's just going to happen. The era of cheap and easy soybean production is quickly fading away. One of the things that is just starting to show up in the county and we will start to see more and more is soybean cyst nematode or SCN. SCN, left undetected can quietly and quickly take a lot of yield away from you. And right along with SCN we often see an increase in SDS, sudden death syndrome in soybeans. This fall would be a good time to get out and do some soil sampling for SCN. Sampling is easy, you just go out in locations in the field and pull some soil samples down about six inches right from within the row. Take samples from a half dozen locations, mix it up, bring it into the office and we'll send it off. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Early Season Wheat Stand Issues

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Some of the early seeded wheat may be up by now but most producers are more concerned about finishing harvest and wheat seeding to spend much time looking at stands. But soon enough those wheat stands will be front and center in producers minds. One of the things that can impact early stand establishment is varying soil moisture conditions. Both too wet and too dry can have a significant impact. Sometimes, though not as often these years, wheat can be planted too deep! If you are seeing spotty emergence start digging down and looking for seeds. Aphids and Hessian fly will infest small wheat, but they don't cause stand issues. Fall armyworms can make a stand appear to go backwards in a big hurry and may need treatment if found. Keep checking fields though and if you aren't sure what's happening, give me a call! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Dormant Season Herbicides on Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have any alfalfa fields I want you to start getting out and walking through them. I want you to separate the plants and check out the ground for tiny little plants that aren't alfalfa. Tiny little sprigs of green are likely one of the annual bromes like cheat. Small plants with round leaves are going to be things like pennycress or henbit. All of these are weeds that will grow like crazy next spring, make your fields look really bad and degrade the quality of that first cutting. If you are finding more than about 5 seedlings of any kind per square foot you need to consider a dormant season treatment unless you have roundup ready alfalfa. It's too early for dormant season treatments but going out anytime after the alfalfa goes dormant with some of these fairly low cost herbicides, AND some phosphorus, can really improve your stand! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Use Starter Fertilizer on Remaining Wheat Planting

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. On the first day of fall I did what I often do, I checked the 2 and 4 inch soil temperature on the area mesonet sites. Now, by September 22nd you may not think that things had cooled off all that much. We'd had those days of highs in the 40s but then lots of sunshine and temps back up to the 70s and low 80s. But soil average temperature was already down into the 60s. Nearly a month later it hasn't gotten warmer, trust me! All of this is to say that as the temperatures cool the availability of phosphorus in the soil becomes less to those little wheat seedlings. Additionally, wheat roots are less efficient at getting the phosphorus out of the soil. If you aren't through planting yet I want you to seriously consider using starter fertilizer on all your remaining wheat plantings. Even just 20 pounds of P in the furrow will be a big help to that wheat! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.