

Ag Radio Programs for August 30 - September 5, 2021

Sugar Cane Aphid Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I spent a lot of time last week looking at or for sugarcane aphids. The good news is that outside of one field that was just loaded, other fields have had few to no aphids. I also noticed quite a few beneficial insects in all fields but more so in those field with aphids. With the first of September not far off many fields are moving from milk to dough stage and risk from headworms or sugarcane aphids is waning quite a bit. Fields that are just now blooming or heading are certainly going to be at greater risk. Regardless, I strongly encourage sorghum producers to keep checking fields for aphids every 3 or 4 days. While I really think most fields will be in good shape and not requiring treatment you never know when you're going to find a hot spot outbreak in a late field that will need to be treated. If you have questions, call me! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cattle in Farm Ponds

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We had some pretty hot weather last week and more than just a few cattle were spending time in farm ponds for a multitude of reasons ranging from cooling off to keeping flies off the legs. But how healthy is it for cattle to spend time IN a pond. We've long heard that it's better to fence off the pond and use it as a water source below the dam, but in all honesty, that's based on water quality concerns and I support that notion. But what about health of the cattle? A couple of K-State vets recently weighed in on that very topic. Assuming that the pond isn't overly sedimented in with waste, it's probably not too unhealthy. Incidence of foot rot increases if cattle spend a lot of time in ponds and a somewhat elevated risk of mastitis in beef cattle. But even taking these two things into account, the vets felt that the risk was fairly low! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Fall Armyworm in New Plantings

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I think we've about talked fall armyworms to death the past couple of weeks but we aren't going to be out of the woods with these rascals until we have a pretty good freeze in October or early November. This is different from armyworms or army cutworms that do overwinter. But given the number of fall armyworms we have been seeing I'd be on high alert in newly planted alfalfa, cover crop blends as well as any of the cereals planted for forage or grain. As any of these start to emerge you need to be out there monitoring them for feeding damage. Small larvae do not immediately start eating off plants but they start eating the leaf surfaces in what we call windowpane feeding damage - look for clear spots on the leaves. Once they get a little bigger they'll cut off plants so we want to catch them early and treat them if necessary! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Smoke Causing Corn Issues?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've seen a lot of corn fields with droopy ears in recent weeks. Droopy areas can certainly occur as we approach maturity but premature ear droop can cause issues and hurt yield. Certainly heat and drought can cause premature droop but really anything that restricts photosynthesis reduces carbohydrate flow and once that ear droops it can shut off nutrient flow to the ear causing premature black layer formation. This will hurt test weight and yield. But we may have had more than just heat and drought impacting the corn this year. If you remember all those smoky hazy days this summer keep in mind that the haze also reduced how much sunlight reached the leaf. In fact, measurements taken in eastern Kansas this summer showed light intensity below normal. I guess we'll see what the harvest says! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Timing the Last Alfalfa Cutting

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Once we hit early September alfalfa producers start doing a little mental dance of when to take that last cutting of alfalfa. We want alfalfa to go into winter dormancy with a full load of root carbohydrates, or if you will, a full tank of gas. After we take a cutting off, the alfalfa starts to regrow utilizing root reserves, assuming there is adequate soil moisture of course. After about 15 to 20 days of growth the alfalfa plant has enough leaf area to start to restore food reserves and four to six weeks after cutting root reserves are fully restored. I normally feel that alfalfa is going to go dormant around the first of November so just to be on the safe side I'd like to take that last normal cutting of alfalfa around the 15th or 20th of September. If your alfalfa is ready to cut, go ahead and cut it, then just let the crop regrow until dormancy. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.