

Soybean Gall Midge

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As if we don't have enough to worry about, we have another new soybean pest likely headed this way. The Soybean Gall Midge is established in eastern Nebraska where it was first identified in 2011. While we have no confirmed sightings it has been found not far north of Kansas in Nebraska border counties. It is in the same family as the Hessian fly and was just finally described as a new species in late 2018. The adult midge lays eggs at the base or lower stems of soybean plants and the young larva, that look like tiny maggots, burrow into the soybean stem. Under severe infestations, areas of fields can lose over 50% of yield. We have no control recommendations yet because it is such a new pest. So don't let anyone sell you a bill of goods on this, we don't even know if it is here. But if you see funny sick spots in your field, call me! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Burning Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A month ago things were dry enough that I was rightly concerned about pasture burning. For the northern Flint Hills we discourage burning unless there is a full soil moisture profile at the time of burning. Thanks to several rounds of storms during the month of March we are there and I wouldn't have any reservations about burning pastures this spring. Of course, just because we have the right soil moisture conditions is not justification enough to burn. Why else are you burning? Depending on pasture condition and the type of livestock you are putting out there, and if you burned the last couple of years, there may not be a reason to burn. Oh and regarding bromegrass waterways, ditches or even brome fields. Given the late start that the brome had this year, there's still time to get these burned too, but do it soon! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Corn Seeding Rates

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Based on what I see in corn fields at harvest time, I'd say that 3 out of 4 fields are planted at less than their ideal seeding rate. Ears of corn filled with kernels to the very end look pretty, but are the fastest indication of less than optimal planting rates. Until you get most ears pulling back a ways from the tip, you haven't reached maximum productivity threshold. Granted, given the cost of seed you may not gain enough yield from that last thousand kernels to justify it. Quick and dirty here's seeding rate suggestion and this is minimum seed drop, not final population. Irrigation 33,000 seeds. Dryland 100 to 150 bu/ac yield potential based on past years performance, 26,000 seeds per acre and over 150 bushel yield potential 28,000. Newer hybrids have a lot more compensatory capability and if it's a dry year, high populations aren't so bad. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Residual Herbicides in Corn

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I can remember in the early 1960s the first time my Dad used atrazine in the corn and milo fields. He banded it on over the row because we can always cultivate between the rows and it was cheaper that way. I couldn't believe how the field looked before the first cultivation. Five inches on either side of each row was weed free with plenty of weeds between the rows. We spent 30 good years with soil applied residual herbicides. Then the Roundup Ready technology came along and we had 20 years of easy weed control, but that bubble has burst. It doesn't matter if it's corn, soybeans or grain sorghum, we really need to plan on using soil applied residual herbicides as the base line for good weed control. Sure, we can still come back in and clean up with glyphosate or glufosinate, but you have to start with that residual base! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Weeds are the Symptom

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With very few exceptions, weeds don't get established and take over an area on their own. Weeds are opportunists; they look for an opening, for a chance. If we give it to them, they'll take it and run and then you have a problem. When someone says they have a weed taking over a field or a pasture I'm going to do two things. I'm going to first make sure that we identify what the weed is and then I'm going to start to look at what has happened in the management of that field that has given that plant or those plants, an opportunity to gain a foot hold. In a pasture, are we overgrazing it creating a lot of bare soil? Annual broomweed loves this situation. If we have lots of foxtail in the brome, when are we fertilizing, swathing and how low are we mowing it? Figure out what's going on because weeds are the symptom, not the problem. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.