

Ag Radio Programs for March 8 - 14, 2021

Great To See the Sun

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's the second week of March and it's been great to get some spring like weather with more on the way. It is still winter for a few more days so let's not get too carried away yet, but for crop producers there's a lot of things that this weather signals. For starters, we've just started accumulating growing degree days for our friend the alfalfa weevil. The cold weather pretty much reset them to zero but warmer than average temperatures will cause us to accumulate faster than average. This warm weather is also triggering a lot of early spring plants to start growing. Which means, if you hadn't topdressed your wheat or bromegrass by now, you're losing ground and don't let anymore time go by! Every day you wait is potential yield or pounds of forage that you've left in the field by not fertilizing earlier this winter! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Liming

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In recent years we've seen a lot of fields developing low pH soils much faster than previously. The reason is very simple - nitrogen fertilizer. 40 years ago we were growing a lot of wheat and applying 60 pounds of nitrogen fertilizer annually. Today we grow a lot more corn and applications rates of 200 pounds of nitrogen fertilizer, or more, are not uncommon. 100 pounds of any standard nitrogen fertilizer will acidify the soil at a rate that would require 180 pounds of calcium carbonate to neutralize. So one corn crop today is going to acidify the soil as much as over three years of wheat production would 40 years ago. So liming has become more important than ever BECAUSE legumes, like soybeans, are far more sensitive to low pH soils (under 6 pH) than corn, wheat or sorghum. Start testing so you can start liming! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Foxtail Control in Brome

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Even though it often doesn't show up until AFTER we have harvested our bromegrass, foxtail has been an increasing problem in brome over the past 20 years. A year or two ago Prowl H2O was labeled for pre-emerge control of grassy weeds in established bromegrass. Research plots were established last year using several herbicides including Prowl H2O with applications in late March or after harvest in late June. While other products provided less than 50% control of foxtail Prowl H2O applied in late March provided over 95% control eight weeks after treatment. Late summer foxtail infestation was still unacceptable so additional work needs to be done on sequential applications for longer control. BUT, if you are tired of harvesting foxtail with your brome, you may want to consider a treatment of Prowl H2O. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Control Maretail Soon

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. 99% of the maretail in our fields that are going to soybeans started growing last fall. Right now most of those plants are just a cute little rosette, flat on the ground, 1 to 2 inches across. But soil temperatures are already back in the 40's, air temperature is even warmer and the sun is shining. Those little maretail plants are putting more roots down fast and getting ready to grow like crazy. Once that plant starts to bolt and shoot up that flower stalk, control will start to become more and more difficult. Burn down herbicide combos really need to include 2,4-D and or dicamba, along with glyphosate or glufosinate plus an appropriate residual control product like Classic, Canopy, First Rate, Valor, Sharpen, Optill, Verdict or even good old metribuzin are going to give good control, but get them applied by the end of March! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Why Weren't Soil Temperatures Colder?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the things that having automated weather stations around the state allows you to do is monitor in real time soil temperatures against air temperatures. Here in the northern Flint Hills, during that absolutely coldest weather in mid February, our coldest soil temperatures at 2 inches down were only in the mid 20s even though air temperatures were in the -15 to -20 range. So how is that possible?

There were two key factors at work here. First of all, the surface soil was wet. Dry soil allows cold to penetrate more deeply more quickly. Water has a great tempering effect. Secondly, we hadn't had a lot of really cold weather prior to this so soil temperatures in that top foot were still relatively warm. Warm air rises, even in soil. So warmer temperatures from below, came up, thereby moderating the extreme cold above. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.