

Ag Radio Programs for July 4 - 10, 2022

No Program - 4th of July

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent.

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Scout for Gray Leaf Spot

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I had a producer call me a month ago and ask if they needed to be spraying fungicide on corn. Well, that was a tricky question without a yes or no answer. You never want to just accept a recommendation to spray corn with fungicides until it has been scouted. Gray leaf spot is likely the one you need to be scouting for right now. If needed, fungicides are going to be most effective when applied from tasseling to R1. Earlier fungicide applications simply don't provide long enough protection. If gray leaf spot gets started after R1 then it's questionable if it's going to do enough damage to justify a treatment. Check leaves from the ear leaf down and look for brown spots with yellow halos around them or lesions with distinct edges that don't cross veins. If you have questions, give me a call and we'll help you scout! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Potato Leafhoppers

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've gotten some really nice and unexpected rains so we should be getting good regrowth after alfalfa harvest. Often, once we get into July, we almost expect alfalfa to not get much regrowth due to dry weather. But far too often I suspect that this lack of July growth is not due to drought but due to stunting by potato leafhoppers. Potato leafhoppers are small sap sucking insects that inject a toxin into the alfalfa plant that stunts alfalfa growth. If you walk through an alfalfa field and see lots of little yellow-green wedge shaped insects that hop or fly just ahead of you, then you have leafhoppers. Feeding damage is seen as a V shaped yellowing of the leaf tip. Once a stand has been fed upon enough that it is stunted, it won't start growing until that stunted growth, and leafhopper eggs, are removed and the stubble sprayed. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Timing Prairie Hay Harvest

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Quality of forage, including crude protein and digestibility, is directly correlated to stage of growth of the forage being harvested. The more mature the forage becomes, the lower the quality will be. As forages mature and develop seed, leaf area is lost, which is the highest quality part of the forage plant, and proteins are pulled away from leaves to help develop seeds. Additionally, digestible parts of stems and leaves start to turn to lignin which is very poorly digested by animals. Granted, later stages of maturity produce more pounds to the acre, but usability, digestability, of that forage drops. Then there's the whole point of giving that prairie hay a chance to restore food reserves before fall. With these points in mind, we strongly recommend that prairie hay be cut the last half of July and very early August! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don't Cut Too Low

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For years we used forage mowers that used some variation of a sickle bar. Because no one wanted to replace busted sections we kept our hay cutting height fairly high to avoid rocks and stumps. Then along came disc mowers and those fears were gone which meant that cutting height was dropped. Which then created it's own set of problems! Alfalfa, brome grass and native hay can all have problems when mowing height starts to drop below 4 inches above ground surface. The lower you cut the forages, the more bare soil you expose. The more bare soil you expose the greater the opportunity for annual weeds and weedy grasses to germinate and invade your hay fields. We've seen a big increase in foxtail and crabgrass in brome due to this and we may be seeing it in natives too. So please, keep the mowing height at least 4 inches. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.