

Too Late To Fertilize?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Last week I had a producer call me up to ask if it was too late to fertilize bromegrass or wheat. Do you know how hard it was NOT to scream. When you wait until the last minute to fertilize, the results are going to show that you waited until the last minute. You HAVE to go into the start of the cropping year with the expectation of having a good crop. Yes, it's been a dry winter. If you are just now topdressing your wheat, your crop will suffer. In all honesty you should have had that fertilizer on back in November. Bromegrass is the same thing. If the fertilizer isn't out there so the precipitation can take it in, you're now behind the 8-ball. If you didn't fertilize, yes, you need to get it on. I would likely back off to about 60% of what you would normally apply, but you still need to get some applied, and then do it earlier next year! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Grazing Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Grazing wheat is something that we don't do all that often in our part of Kansas and I suspect it's in part due to how we use wheat in our rotation. So often we are following soybeans or corn which means that it is getting planted late, resulting in not enough time to get enough growth to graze it. You really need to be pushing wheat in towards the end of September if you want to graze it. Now, for those of you who do take advantage of this high quality fairly inexpensive forage you also need to know that if you don't get the cattle off the wheat soon enough in the spring, you can impact yield. We used to call this jointing time or that time when the head moved above ground and could get grazed off. Now we call it first hollow stem. Not sure which one is easier to find, but rest assured, we aren't there yet, so keep grazing! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don't Forget Phosphorus and Sulfur on Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Want to guess what the most important soil factor is for maintaining good soybean yield? If you guessed anything other than soil pH, you are wrong. Yes, phosphorus levels are important. But in numerous research studies, as long as you had 20 ppm phosphorus, 17 actually, adding phosphorus rarely resulted in yield improvement. Although it did help to maintain soil levels. In years like this, given the cost of fertilizer, go ahead and use up those levels you've built up. But soil pH is critical for the nitrogen fixing bacteria and they really don't like acid soils. The other thing that we need to start paying more attention to, in soybeans and really in many of our crops, is sulfur. Many fields have sulfur levels that are deficient or borderline. So start testing for that and also keep an eye on potassium as those levels are falling as well! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

What Row Spacing

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you want to get soybean growers in a big argument, ask them what's the best yielding row spacing, 15 or 30 inches.

Based on yield studies in Kansas, the difference isn't really all that much. In multiple locations, the long term average yield difference between the two was only 3 bu/ac. At the upper end, in a few tests, it got to 6 bu/ac. In low yielding environments, 30 inch rows had a slight edge but in medium and high yielding environments 15 inch rows had that slight edge. In many studies, there was no significant difference. There may be other reasons to use narrow rows including quicker canopy closing to help control weeds. Or maybe using wider rows to facilitate post emerge weed control applications. Bottom line is that in Kansas, soybeans didn't really care that much which row spacing you went with. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Soybean Planting Rate

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We have long known that soybeans were amazingly elastic in that they can adjust to wide variations in seeding rates without a lot of change in yield. In fact, it was found that with seeding rates between 120 and 180,000 seeds per acre, we didn't find much different in yields. However, what researchers did find was that optimum seeding rate varied greatly depending on the inherent yield environment of a field with low yielding environments needing higher seeding rates, which sort of corresponds to late planting wheat needing more seeds per acre. In low yield environments, avg under 40 bu/ac, then final stands of 127,000 was ideal. But in medium yield, 40 to 60 bu/ac or high yield, over 60 bu/ac average, the ideal final population was 96 to 97,000 plants per acre. Adjust based on five year average yields! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.