

How about early season half rate fungicides?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Even in spite of the recent weather, spring is coming and the wheat is going to really take off and grow before long. One of the trends that many wheat producers have been considering or trying in recent years is early season fungicide treatments. By early season I mean about the time you might be putting on topdress or applying your herbicide treatment. The general practice has been to put on a half rate of fungicide with these treatments and since you are already making a pass over the field there's not an extra application charge and often the treatment has been a half rate of a generic fungicide so we are talking just a few dollars per acre. The first question is, does this work? Depending on how you define, does it work, will yes and no. These low rates do a great job of controlling those early season foliar diseases like brown spot, powdery mildew etc. There is no doubt that they do that. But the first problem is that this control doesn't always seem to relate to a corresponding increase in yield. So that's concern number one. Concern number two has much bigger long range implications. In Europe, where use of fungicides is much greater, fungicide resistant disease strains are emerging. One of the quickest ways to put pressure on any organism to develop pesticide resistance is to expose the organism to low rates of that pesticide. It happened with pyrethroid ear tags and horn flies, it's happening with weeds and herbicides so it could happen with fungicides. Hold off until later and then go full rate! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Windbreak Renovations

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In the 1930s and again in the 1950s, we saw periods of drought and soil erosion. Windbreaks were planted and cared for in the hopes of reducing this wind erosion, and they worked. Farmers also used windbreaks around their farmsteads to break the wind, especially the winter wind to make conditions better for their livestock but also to make it easier to keep their homes warm when the winter winds howled. But technology came along that greatly improved home construction. Homes became tighter, windows leaked less air, insulation became commonplace and even furnaces became better and more efficient. It became much easier to keep our homes warm regardless of how hard the wind blew. Windbreaks became less common and old windbreaks started to die out. Windbreaks still help with the comfort level around farmsteads. They do make a difference in heating bills and it sure makes a difference to the livestock. One of our foresters was in my office the other day. He was working on some windbreak renovations and mentioned that there was still some money available to do windbreak renovations, at least for the time being. If you have a newer home out in the country without a windbreak, give me a call. I can come out, make an onsite visit and help you develop a windbreak plan. Renovating a windbreak is another story. It takes more effort, more planning and more work. But if you've got one that could use some help, give me a call and I'll get in touch with our forester and get him out to do an evaluation. You may wind up with a better windbreak, and get some help. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

Spring oats for forage

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was talking about oats last week and wanted to expand a little bit more on spring oats for forage production. You can use spring oats as pasture and provide some good short term grazing in April and May. April and May can be a period of time when you are spending a lot of time feeding cattle because bluestem pasture isn't ready yet. Naturally we're going to have to get a break in this crazy weather to make this work, so perhaps not this year, but let's just lay out a scenario that could easily work for the producer that has cattle and grain. Get in as soon as you can and plant a couple of bushels per acre of oats. Apply 75 pounds of nitrogen preplant and another 50 pounds six weeks after emergence. Yes, we're really going to push these oats. Once they have enough root growth to hold the plant in the soil, turn the cattle out on them. OR, go ahead and let them go to boot or even late milk stage and cut them for hay. Studies at the Hutchinson experiment field showed that with this production scenario three to five tons per acre of hay with a TDN of 56% and 10% protein. I'll guarantee that's better than most brome hay I'm seeing tested. Here's the great thing, either way, graze or hay, you've got great livestock forage AND, you could get in there in early June after haying or grazing and plant soybeans or grain sorghum if soil moisture and rain outlook are appearing good. Or, on the crazy notion that the oats may be looking real good, you could harvest them for grain. But since oats are prone to adverse weather during grain filling, using the oats for forage may still be best. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.