

Wheat Harvest Weed Issues

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As I have mentioned before, the short wheat has me concerned, not just about the size of the crop, but the battle we will be having with weeds at harvest time. Without a fully closed canopy, weeds are going to get a chance to get going earlier than normal and the recent rains have been just enough to make sure that this does come to fruition. As we get closer to harvest we are going to want to be paying close attention to this issue so we avoid sending lots of green leafy material through the combine. We do have some options for pre-harvest herbicides to control growing weeds, but we need to be doing some advance planning as many of these have pre harvest waiting periods and if you are thinking of double cropping into the wheat stubble then there are some considerations also. Our choices basically come down to 2,4-D, dicamba, glyphosate, carfentrazone or Aim, and metsulfuron methyl (ally) plus 2,4-D. All of these will do pretty good at knocking down growing weeds but follow the restrictions. Most will not allow use of the straw for livestock feed - well, this year's crop isn't going to be much of a straw crop. Most have to go onto mature or nearly mature wheat or at least hard dough stage. Most also have a 10 to 14 day waiting period after application until harvest. This two week waiting period is probably not a bad thing because it's going to take about that long to get the weeds dying and drying down. If you have questions about harvest aids, give me a call! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Early Season Soybean Weed Control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the things that Roundup Ready technology has done is to make us not too excited about early season weeds in our crops. We know that we can go in when the field is solid green, spray our glyphosate and end up with a pretty good looking field. In fact, we'll let those weeds get pretty darn big before we spray with the intent of treating once and being done with it. But here's the problem. Early season weed competition takes a healthy toll in potential yield, especially when soil moisture may be a limiting factor before the season is out. The upper end of yield potential is determined fairly early on in any crop's life. With wheat, head size is determined at jointing. With sorghum, head size, and thereby ultimately yield, is determined about 30 days after emergence. Corn is a little later but ear size is being determined at about V6 or when the 6th true leaf collar is visible. Soybeans are a little bit different because they can generate more and more flowers as time goes on. Ultimately though, what I'm trying to get at is that even though you can effectively control those weeds, especially if you are growing a roundup ready crop, that early season weed competition takes moisture, nutrients and perhaps even light away from your crop. All of these things can have a negative impact on yield. Use some pre-emerge weed control to take care of weed competition in the first 30 to 45 days, even in roundup ready crops. Then if you need to come in with some kind of post emerge control, be it glyphosate or something else, you aren't trying to control nearly as many weeds! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Pasture Weeds Aren't Really Weeds

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Every year I have pasture managers bring in a lot of plants from their pastures to be identified and for recommendations on how to control them. The problem is that many of these are not what I would call weeds and most certainly don't need to be controlled. A healthy pasture is NOT just a collection of 4 or 5 grass species and everything else is a nuisance. A healthy tall grass prairie is dozens to over a hundred different species of plants, both grasses and forbs or broadleaf plants. The roots of grasses and forbs often exist at different levels. The grasses are more fibrous and shallow, the forbs more often taprooted and much deeper. They aren't competing for moisture or nutrients. A lot of the forbs are highly palatable to livestock, especially at early growth stages. Many of these forbs are legumes. They add a great deal of protein to the cattle diets and they add a little nitrogen to the soil for the grass plants to utilize. The exact proportion of each of the species of plants in any prairie will vary from year to year based on weather and grazing pressure. Following a few years of drought and especially if stocking rates weren't adjusted, it may appear that some forbs are taking over the pasture when in reality they just have less competition. Back off on grazing and get a little more rain and everything will be fine again. I do want brush controlled as well as noxious weed like musk thistle and sericea lespedeza. But do we need wide scale spraying of pasture for "weeds"? Very rarely. If you have a question about a plant, bring it in so I can ID it, but please don't just blanket spray! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.