

Voles

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I had a producer call me last week about milo heads that were bent over in one corner of their field. I immediately thought corn borer as corn borer will infest sorghum and usually causes the stalk to break over somewhere below the head. However, the producer indicated that it looked like something was chewing on the stalk from the outside, not the inside. Hmm, I thought, I'd better take a look at some of these! The producer brought some of the stalks to me and I immediately saw that it wasn't corn borer but a rodent. While mice will climb plants to get to food, this appeared to more likely be the work of a vole. That is vole with a V, not mole with an M! Voles are native rodents that most people would probably assume to be a mouse. They are about the same size or slightly larger, they have a shorter tail and to me they looked sort of humpbacked. Their fur also tends to look a little coarser than typical mouse fur. Generally what we have locally are prairie voles and fortunately they are not a protected species. While they live in tunnels in the ground they are notorious for making surface runways at ground level but beneath snow, vegetation or debris. Because of this I'm somewhat surprised that we haven't seen more damage show up in no-till fields. Generally we won't have a problem unless we have an isolated population explosion. Generally we don't treat for voles. Trapping can be undertaken but difficult. Toxicants can be used but are also expensive and time consuming. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Treat Sericea Lespedeza Now!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The rain we have received since September 1st has been a real blessing, especially for those wanting to control sericea lespedeza. The late bud stage through bloom stage is an excellent time to apply herbicides. If an area gets rain in August or early September it'll really move the plant along. If it's droughty, you're better off to leave the sprayer sitting in the shed. If you have dense stands you need to do a good broadcast spraying but if you just have scattered plants or limited stands then spot spraying would certainly be an appropriate way to go. Most of our area shouldn't have such extensive stands that we need to have aerial applications, most of the time we are going to be looking at ground broadcast treatments or spot sprays. As with any herbicide control I DO NOT recommend using a blaster or mist blower. For some of the herbicide options it would be illegal but we also need to apply the product with more carrier. For fall treatment we are going to see the best results with a herbicide that has metsulfuron methyl. That quickly narrows the list down to products like Escort XP, Chaparral and Cimarron Plus. All three of these can be used in broadcast applications or spot spraying in native grass without concern. All of them do need a non-ionic surfactant included. Tall fescue will be stunted by Escort. Smooth brome and tall fescue may be stunted by Chaparral. If pod fill has begun at the time of spraying viable seed will be produced so spraying treatment for seedlings is recommended, but keep in mind that sericea control is not a one and done, it's a multiple year effort. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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Wheat Variety Test Bulletin available

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Finally, just about a month before wheat planting, we have the new wheat variety test results bulletin. They are here at the Extension office and also available at Geary Grain. I would encourage you to pick up a copy even if you do have all your seed bought and ready to go for this fall just so you can keep up on what's happening. Certainly not every single variety available is represented in these bulletins - companies have to take the effort to enter varieties in the test, but generally the most popular and the newest varieties will be represented. The great thing about the variety test result booklets is that there is far more than just yields in them. Sure, they have the yield results from the multiple locations around the state including test weight, plant height and heading date. That's all important information but they also have multiple year averages at some locations to show how a variety has held, or not held, yield over a period of years. But then there's all the other tables that show the disease resistance for the various varieties. You have Hessian Fly ratings as well as seed size (indicated by 1,000 seed weight and seeds per pound. By the way, yes there is a big difference in seeds per pound. This year it ranges from 9,400 clear up to 17,500. This is good information to know to get your planting rates right! There's also a table that breaks out the plant variety protection status of most of the common wheats so you can decide which one's are legal to keep seed back for. As well as an extensive listing of seed producers in the state. So next time you're in town, stop by and pick up a copy. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.