

Cover Crops

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I like to describe cover crops as something old that's new again. A cover crop is simply some plant or blend of plants that are seeded into a field before or after harvesting a crop to provide protection for the soil, take up and hold nutrients on a field, and/or to provide some livestock feed. Cover crops are different than nurse crops. Nurse crops are grown to protect a slower growing crop. We sometimes have seeded oats or wheat with brome grass to provide cover, take off the oats or wheat crop and along comes the brome grass. Cover crops can be like a green manure crop, but green manure crops were generally used during a standard growing season to provide nitrogen for the next crop. Sweet clover and alfalfa have often been used as green manure crops. As long as I've been here, some folks have planted turnips or winter radishes in fields for late fall forage for cattle. But we are now seeing 2, 3 even 10 and 12 different species seeded together to be used as cover crops as well as provide livestock forage in the late fall and early winter. We have often been hesitant to use them in our area for fear of soil moisture depletion but we have found that this is rarely a problem even much further west in Kansas. I think cover crops can do a great job of trapping nutrients on the field and keeping them out of our streams and lakes. There's new research being done and more producers are starting to dabble with cover crops. If you are interested in learning more or have questions, give me a call! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Control Bindweed in the Fall

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I don't talk as much about bindweed as I used to. It's still around, it's still a noxious weed, but it is far less of a problem in crop fields as it once was, thanks in great part to Roundup Ready technology and glyphosate. But we still have far too much field bindweed in pastures, waste areas and farmsteads, and fall is the time to really get on this stuff. Woody plants start shutting off nutrient flow from the leaves to the root system in August. So it's hard to get good control with herbicides. But bindweed keeps growing in the fall until a hard freeze so in September and October it is still moving a lot of nutrients from the leaves to the root system. So herbicides that are applied in September and October will likewise get moved to the root system quite readily. Fall is also a time when plants sensitive to phenoxy herbicide vapor drift are going dormant so you have much less likelihood of curling leaves. The old standby products of 2,4-D and dicamba are still very effective as a fall treatment. In lawns and grass settings these can be good low cost options. But there are newer products that one should also consider especially if you have a bad bindweed problem. For fallow crops fields or stubble fields I'm still a big fan of glyphosate plus 2,4-D and or dicamba in these settings and possibly also Tordon depending on crop rotation. The product that not enough people are using for bindweed is quinclorac which you may find as Facet or Quinstar. Follow label directions but this stuff is good. It's also one of the ingredients in the homeowner weed killer with crabgrass killer for use in home lawns! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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Get that Volunteer Controlled

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One thing that I really noticed last week after those great rains was how all the wheat stubble fields were turning GREEN. Which was about as predictable as the sun rising in the east in the morning! We've been over this many times before. Volunteer wheat coming up now is going to be a great nurse crop for about a gazillion insect and disease pests. We need that volunteer wheat dead two weeks before planting. If you get it controlled and we have another flush of volunteer come up later in the month, it really won't be much of a problem because it won't have had enough time to get infected from some other source. That's why we want the volunteer wheat dead two weeks prior to planting. It needs to be controlled in fields going back to wheat. It needs to be controlled in fields anywhere near fields that are going to be planted to wheat. The wheat curl mites can blow over ½ mile to infect new wheat. Don't assume we'll never have an east wind either. Get them all cleaned up! If you are using herbicides, you need to be spraying soon to give the herbicides time to work. If you are spraying volunteer in a field to be planted to wheat read the labels for waiting periods. Glyphosate has no waiting period, but 2,4-D and Dicamba can be anywhere from 2 weeks to over a month depending on the product and the rate. There's also several newer products like Sharpen, Olympus, Maverick and Amber, Finesse and PrePare that can be used in conjunction with burn down treatments preplant for some residual control of emerging weeds, including cheat. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.