

## Flag smut of wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Late last week there was a press release about a wheat disease being found in the state that I bet a lot of you have never heard of, Flag Smut. Flag Smut is one of those old time diseases that, like all the smuts or bunts, is easily dealt with by using seed treatments. Well, we all know that there's a lot of wheat seed that gets planted every year that isn't treated. As a result, I was seeing a lot of traditional loose smut in some fields earlier this month. It's hard to tell where the flag smut came from - it was known in the state clear back in the 1920s, but even then we knew that seed treatments could prevent it. Unlike the smuts that many of us are use to dealing with, that are apparent on the developing grain, flag smut infests the flag leaf. Long gray-black streaks develop on leaf blades and sheaths. The disease can cause the flag leaf to curl, but several other diseases can do that too. Flag Smut is far more common in cooler wheat production areas and especially on other types of wheat. Certainly, the abnormally cool and wet weather this year has made it a banner year for wheat diseases of all kinds. So far, the only confirmed reports of flag smut have been in counties in northwest Kansas. Coming this late in the season, this disease poses little production risk, but political and trade risks are another story. What it does point out, though, is the need to always use a seed treatment. We often get lulled in to a false sense of security, but a few dollars an acre can save a lot of problems. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Can I Still Plant Corn?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'm pretty sure that there are a few producers that were planning to plant corn about a month ago that just didn't get it done. So here we are now in the first week of June and you may be wondering, can I even get a crop if I still plant corn? Well, that depends on a lot of things, not the least being what the weather is going to be like from now through September. In studies at K-State, under low stress environments, planting even as late as mid June resulted in yield reductions of less than 20% from traditional planting dates. Those studies were done with 100, 108 and 112 day hybrids. However, if there was stress early in the season and then the rest of the year was normal or low stress, later planting dates actually had better yields. This could very well describe this year as we've had the early cool and wet stress. The inverse of that scenario is when rain and temperatures were good early in the year and then it turned off hot and dry as the summer went on. Under those scenarios, all three maturities took nose dives on yield with later planting date. So ultimately the question becomes how soon can you plant and what's the rest of the summer going to look like. Right now the three month outlook is showing a good probability of below normal temperatures and above normal rainfall. But keep in mind that these long range predictions are shaky at best. What you have to decide is are you locked into corn because of herbicides already applied or other rotation restrictions. If you aren't locked into corn, then it may be time to seriously consider making the switch to beans or grain sorghum. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Manage for the Worst Case Scenario

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week I attended some wheat field days and spent a fair amount of time chatting with fellow agronomists. One might think that when a bunch of agronomists get together at a wheat field day, they'd be talking about new wheat varieties, which we did. But invariably the discussions always slid away from variety selection and into the realm of more holistic thoughts on overall crop management. Crop producers, by their very nature, are cheap. They understandably try to be as frugal as possible to keep production costs down. It's always been that way and always will be that way. I imagine when commercial fertilizers started becoming more readily available in the 1940s producers were slow to leave legume crop rotations and utilization of manure. The idea of spending money on something that they'd gotten for "free" was hard to accept. Now everyone does it. We've gone the same path with hybrid seeds, herbicides, insecticides and we're probably at the same point now with fungicides. I heard somebody once say that anyone can look like a good crop producer in a good year. But a bad year is when you separate the good from the average. Maybe we need to be looking at every year as a potential worst case scenario and go into it just planning that we'll be using seed treatment and fungicide and anything else. Had we all known how May was going to turn out, everyone would have applied fungicides in the first few days of the month. That's behind us now. So as we move on, even with our summer crops, let's always be thinking about, what might we need to do to help this crop? This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.