

Oil Spill Prevention, Final Rules

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. About a year ago we were hearing a lot about the EPA and oil spill prevention and the need for farms with on farm fuel storage over a certain amount to have a containment plan in place. We even held a meeting or two about it with very good attendance. After all that hub-bub leading up to the deadline last spring, the situation quieted down very quickly. So lets get everyone up to speed of what has happened since then. The legislation that put the oil spill prevention control and countermeasures, SPCC, was signed by the president last June. The good news out of all of this is that the final regulation actually increased the levels at which required plans have to be prepared and on file. The guideline on what is considered a reportable discharge was also adjusted. If you were below the previous thresholds, you still are. If you were above the old thresholds, you may no longer be. Originally they were talking about on farm above ground storage in excess of 1,320 gallons. The new threshold is 2,500 gallons of combined storage. If you have less than 2,500 gallons OR you have between 2,500 gallons and 6,000 gallons and have never had a reportable discharge, you do not have to have an SPCC plan. If you have between 6,000 gallons and 20,000 gallons but no single tank is over 10,000 gallons and have never had a reportable discharge, you can self certify. Finally, if you have a combined above ground storage capacity of 20,000 gallons you have to hire an engineer. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Brush Control in Pastures

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As we suspected, we did not see a lot of pastures get burned this year. Had we known that we were going to get the rain we did last week, that may have changed, but as it is, many pastures went unburned. I always say that we need to take advantage of opportunities that come along. One opportunity that comes with an unburned pasture, is the chance to do some brush spraying. For whatever reason, we have long known that trying to spray woody brush in a pasture the same year that you burned it just doesn't work well. So with that in mind, this spring is a great time to go kill some brush. I know that many pasture managers like to spray once and be done with it. Unfortunately, one size does not fit all and no one time is the best time to control all species. The goal in brush control is to treat just after the brush has reached full leaf stage. At that time root reserves are at their lowest and control efforts are most effective. Later on in the summer, leaves have a thick waxy cuticle that inhibits herbicide uptake. So my recommendation is to treat in stages. Buckbrush, and blackberry, are best sprayed in the first half of May. Dogwood is next and should be sprayed from mid May to mid June. Plum is a little later but that mid May to mid June time frame will work pretty good there as well. The last one is sumac - either smooth or aromatic, a.k.a. skunkbrush, and the time to spray that is about June 10 to June 25th. If you absolutely insist on only spraying once and want to maximize control, then aim for that second week of June. But I'd still prefer that you treat in stages! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat issues

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Well, stripe rust is still out there. It hasn't exploded as fast as we thought it might, but with cooler weather this week, it could start to increase more rapidly. Leaf rust is being found but at low levels. With cooler weather back in place leaf rust is going to be very slow to develop but stripe rust will increase. As if that wasn't enough, for those with wheat that was starting to flower last week, we did have a good opportunity for fusarium head blight infection. Fusarium head blight is probably better known as scab. Scab is going to occur when we have rainfall during flowering. It's going to be worse when wheat is notilled into corn stubble. Everest has a fair amount of scab resistance, but most other varieties just need to be considered susceptible. If drier weather holds for this week that will be a good thing. We don't have to have steady rain at heading, just humid misty weather can do it which is why last week could cause problems for fields that were flowering. You can treat for scab, but for right now in fields that haven't started to flower yet, I'd just sit tight. Getting back to rust now, we still need to consider treatment IF there is good yield potential and the field hasn't started to flower. Once we get into mid flower we are pretty much at the end of the fungicide application window. I'm more than happy to get out and walk fields with you. If you want to scout the fields yourself just start walking and looking for rust pustules on the flag leaf. The fields that I was in late last week hadn't really advanced in the amount of stripe rust being found and I wasn't yet finding any rust pustules on the flag leaf. But with cooler weather this week, the situation could change. Call me if you have questions! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.