

Pest Updates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Let's start this morning with alfalfa weevil. They are out there, they are active and you need to get into your field and make sure you know what you're seeing. There are a few cases where a field may be starting to get that white look but once you get out there, the white look is caused by alfalfa stem tips that got frozen. Make sure you are seeing feeding damage in at least 50% of the stems before you treat. Let's switch over to wheat. Other than an occasional scattered tiller or plant I don't think much of our wheat saw any adverse affects from the cold weather. What we are starting to see though are plants dying because the seed wasn't placed deep enough in the ground and most of the time this is following soybeans. We seem to have a real problem getting soybean residue accumulating in a windrow and then we get bridging by the drill and seed get's planted in some of that residue or just barely into the soil instead of that 1 inch minimum planting depth that we need to see. Plants that are trying to grow in the residue or shallowly planted seed, can not develop the secondary roots to get down to that moisture as the surface dries out. Okay, beyond that, we are starting to pick up a few aphids - so far it's the bird cherry-oat aphid. All of our aphid pests have to blow in from the south and we've had lots of days where transport was possible so their numbers will be building. Stripe rust is also showing up. I saw some a week ago and it's been detected nearly to Nebraska so stay tuned on that front! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Smoke Management

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. County Extension agents in the northern Flint Hills had an opportunity to gather with some smoke researchers and KDHE officials for a morning pow-wow on smoke management last week. It was a very good meeting and I want to share some critical points with you this morning. Fire is critical to management of the Flint Hills. It maintains grass stands and it controls cedars. Most other woody species probably need to have herbicides used to control them, fire alone just won't do it. Fire produces smoke and the two big problems of smoke are particulate matter, much of it very very fine and indirectly, it produces ozone. There are a lot of people that are very sensitive to the effects of smoke and their health problems are very real and can not be ignored. Large cities, Wichita, Kansas City, even Lincoln and Omaha, struggle with air quality every summer. When our burning creates issues in April it limits what they can do the rest of the year. What you need to realize is that air quality problems have caused many of these cities to spend a lot of money, millions, hundreds of millions of dollars, to deal with air quality. Our pasture burning is part of a very complex issue. KDHE understands the need to burn the pastures but they also have to pay attention to the health issues that come from air quality. It is very important that we all become more aware of how our fires react and how to minimize impact of the smoke we generate. As grazing land managers we are at a critical time and we control our own destiny when it comes to whether we can continue to use fire as a tool. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Drought Tolerant Corn Hybrids

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In the first five years that I was on the job, in the early 1980's Geary County averaged less than 2000 acres of corn production most all of it under the little bit of irrigation that we have in this county. In the most recent five years, including 2015, we have averaged 11,500 acres of corn annually nearly a six fold increase. I can guarantee you that we didn't develop that much more irrigation capacity nor did we suddenly find ourselves getting 33% more rainfall annually. No, the change came about because of the genetics that the plant breeders were putting into the corn hybrids. Well, that plus roundup ready technology and big changes in the government farm programs. Plant breeders were able to develop corn hybrids that could produce acceptable yields on less water. Now days we even have drought tolerant or DT hybrids. Yield trials of these DT hybrids vs non DT hybrids has been, well variable. If you look at the graphs it looks like you were patterning a shotgun. Some non DT hybrids do nearly as well as the equivalent DT hybrids. And under non drought conditions, you generally aren't giving away any, or much, yield to non DT hybrids. Yield advantages are going to be most obvious when you have many days of leaf rolling. Keep in mind that no hybrid is going to do well under conditions that we would call terminal drought or permanent wilting point. Plants still need water to grow. But if you are planting on upland type soils and are concerned about rainfall prospects for the year and you just refuse to plant the drought hardier grain sorghums, then DT hybrids should be considered. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of

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