

### Alfalfa Weevil Update

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. On one of the warmer days last week I was out in alfalfa fields checking growth and weevils. Many fields had about 1 inch of what I'd consider new spring growth. Not surprisingly, much of it showed weevil feeding damage. But let's just not worry about the weevil right now. Spraying alfalfa when it is this small and there are so many more eggs to hatch is just a waste of time and money. This week is going to be cooler than we've seen in recent weeks. Weevil activity is going to be much slower. On sunny days temperatures probably only have to get above 40 degrees for weevil to start getting active, but even then they are feeding slowly. Insect activity essentially doubles for every ten degree increase in temperature. We've still got a lot of eggs to hatch. Now the other wild card - what has the sub-freezing weather done not only to the weevil but to the alfalfa as well. Those who remember the early April 2007 hard freeze know that all the alfalfa was frozen back to the ground, the weevil starved to death and the regrowth had much less weevil damage. It's going to be a few more days before we'll know how much, if any damage was done to the weevil or the alfalfa. We know that weevil larvae can take pretty chilly temperatures and survive. They move down to the base of the plant and get in under all the debris and duff and that stuff insulates them pretty well and the warmed ground provides heat so they often are just fine, if they got down there. So stay tuned and keep checking! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Yellow and stunted wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In late winter and early spring as wheat is breaking dormancy and starting to grow, it is fairly common for there to be irregular areas in the field where some plants are dark green and others are rather anemic looking. While we can find various leaf diseases early in the season, this often isn't the cause of the problem and I encourage producers to start digging into the reasons why we are seeing this. And digging is often the key thing you need to do. Sticking a shovel in the ground and digging up wheat plants in the good and not so good looking areas is often very insightful. I have found a lot of heavy compaction in areas of poor and discolored growth. The compacted soils makes it hard for roots to develop in the fall. Poor root development often means that plants can't take up the necessary nutrients. I was in some of the same fields recently that had compaction last fall and I am seeing significant root development now, but the plants are already stunted back and tillering will be reduced in these areas. The other common problem I see is poor seed placement due to heavy residue or compaction. Ideally, that seed should be one to one and a half inches deep to allow good crown development, which happens between the seed and the soil surface. The crowns are where the serious root development occurs. Fields with spotty growth that I was in last week time and time again showed seeds right at or just below the soil surface where the wheat looked yellow. In areas of deeper green the seed was a good inch below the soil and there was good root development. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Dryland Corn Final Populations and seeding rates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the things that has changed incredibly over the past three decades is corn production. Thanks to improving genetics and improving production practices, corn acres have increased six to seven fold. One of the things that we have found with the genetic improvements is that we can and need to plant at higher seeding rates. In the mid 1980s, anyone who tried to grow dryland corn was planting around 14 to 16,000 seeds per acre. With the improved genetics of today, we don't even plant rates that low in southwest Kansas! Now, one of the challenges that we face here is trying to decide if we should follow northeast Kansas guidelines or northcentral Kansas guidelines, or shoot somewhere in between. If you think it's going to be a wet year, follow northeast recommendations. If you think it's going to be dry, follow northcentral. For northcentral I think we need to be dropping 23 5 to 26 5 aiming for a final population of 20,000 to 22,500. For northeast with yield potential of 100 to 150 bushels per acre we are about 10% higher, aiming for final populations of 22 to 25,000, so dropping 26 to 28,000 seeds per acre. I think that this seeding rate is a pretty good middle of the road seeding rate year in and year out. One thing that we've seen is that higher seeding rates won't penalize you in drier years. You'll just have more barren stalks. But, by the same token, in wetter years, lower seeding rates WILL penalize you with significantly lower yields. So bite the bullet, spend the money for the extra seed and go for it! Irrigated corn is a different animal completely - better give me a call! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Get your corn herbicide plan together

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know for a fact that many burn down treatments on both corn and soybean ground have already been applied. But we're still likely at least 5 weeks out from the earliest of corn planting (and if it's sooner than that we've had some really wacky weather), so we still have time to get burn down herbicide applications on and maybe even your pre-emerge herbicides down, or at least you're working on the plan! One thing that you need to be learning and paying attention to is using multiple modes of action to help combat building herbicide resistance or dealing with herbicide resistant weed populations. That means you are likely using two modes of action in your burn down and then two more modes of action in your soil applied residual and yes, you do need to be using a soil applied residual herbicide. Don't make the mistake of assuming that you don't have glyphosate resistant weeds - likely everyone does, so just figure you do and treat accordingly. The number of different herbicide combinations are far too many to try to lay them out in a week's worth of programs. Write down your weed problems, let's grab the weed control guide and start looking at the options available. We basically have about five classes of soil applied herbicides. Fortunately many are premixes that have 2 and often three different active ingredients OR can be mixed with atrazine to give added control. Accuron, Lexar EZ, Lumax EZ, and Resicore are all good choices. If you have shattercane consider Corvus. But again, to effectively work on a good herbicide plan, know what weeds you have! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Don't be afraid to ask for help!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the benefits of having started this job back in the early 1980s is that I was around for the farm crisis of that era. I honestly thought that maybe I'd get retired before we face another one. That didn't happen and that's okay. Last week I was serving on a search committee for a position at the Kansas Ag Mediation Services unit of K-State. Four of us on that committee came through the 1980s farm crisis and in between interviews we were talking about the crisis then and the looming crisis now. There are many things that are different between the two eras, but there's also a lot of things that are similar in any such crisis. There are warning signs to always be aware of. Things like excessive use of credit cards for farm production expenses. If you are putting those expenses on the credit card it means you probably aren't getting the credit you need from your lender and there may be a reason for that. But what we really need to look out for is lack of communication. In the ag community we are a proud people. We are often quick to offer help to someone who needs it, or accept help if someone offers it. We truly do take care of each other and we are seeing that right now with the wildfires. But what we aren't very good at is asking for help. I don't know whether it's pride, fear or stubbornness, but boy it's hard to ask for help. Yet the sooner you ask, the sooner issues can be dealt with and situations stopped or corrected. You may need to talk to your lender and work on a plan. You may need to talk to a farm analyst. Whatever it is, please, don't tough it out, ask! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.