

Impacts of flooding on corn

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was back east a couple of weeks ago and all the way through the corn belt I saw standing water and lots of yellow corn. While we may feel that our corn has been looking kind of iffy, trust me, it looks better than what I saw through Illinois, Indiana and Iowa! It seems like every year for the past several we wind up with corn standing in water or at least in saturated soils. Seedling corn, corn V6 or smaller, is more susceptible to flooding than larger corn mainly because the growing point is still at or below ground level. When corn floods, even shallow flooding, measurable reduction in leaf and root growth will occur in the first few hours. Within about 48 hours, all the oxygen in flooded soils is depleted. If the temperatures are above about 77 degrees, plant death can occur in less than 24 hours. Fortunately, much of our early season flooding occurs under cooler conditions so if the flooding is generally less than 48 hours crop injury will be limited. But even under cooler conditions, if flooding continues for more than 72 hours, there will be noticeable death loss and damage. All we can do is wait for the flooding to dissipate and then start checking the plants. You can pull up a few flooded plants and split them open and check the color of the growing point. It should be white to cream colored. If it is darker than that or soft then damage occurred. Or you can wait until 3 to 5 days after the water recedes and check for new leaf growth. New leaf growth means it survived, BUT you may still have issues with root development as we move through the growing season. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Timing of post-emergent weed control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you are relying on post emerge herbicide treatments for part of your weed control program, you have to treat when those weeds, especially the pigweeds, are still small, as in 3 inches or less. This is crucial and I am going to keep hammering on this for several more weeks. Roundup Ready crops made us lazy because it almost didn't matter how big the weeds got, glyphosate would kill them. Well, at least with pigweeds, those days are long gone and we are back to the "if you want good control, spray small weeds" mantra. We have several good herbicides for post emerge control, but we really need to be using them with pre-emerge products, which will hopefully take down about 90 to 95% of the potential seedlings and then use a post emerge to get the rest. BUT, even if you are using the new dicamba or 2,4-D resistant crops, you need to spray SMALL weeds. If you look at the Xtendimax label it calls for weeds to be shorter than 4 inches. Cobra label says maximum height for pigweeds is 3 inches, and for waterhemp, 2 inches. And that's at the higher rates! We're into the time of year where these weeds grow FAST. You may have less than 48 hours, perhaps 24 hours, from the time they are just out of the ground until they are too big for good control. You've got to be in those fields every day and be ready to spray on very short notice! Additionally, especially with the new dicamba and 2,4-D products pay very close attention to the application guidelines on the label! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Timing of Haying of Bromegrass

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've noticed many producers getting into an apparent never ending cycle on bromegrass hay harvest. The cycle is that they fertilize too late, the grass isn't growing well, they delay harvest and then they lose quality because the bromegrass is past the ideal point for quality as harvest was delayed trying to get more tonnage. When hay producers bring bromegrass samples in for forage analysis I like to ask them what they think their brome hay protein content will be. They are usually 2 to 3 points higher than what it winds up being. This is because they delayed harvest to get tonnage. Granted, sometimes harvest got delayed because we had a week of rainy weather and that is understandable. Fortunately brome hay, and native hay, is not as sensitive as alfalfa hay to high quality loss from being rained on. It's a basic difference in structure of the plant. But leaves still make the quality in grass hay and once you get into seed formation of that grass plant, protein content will drop as the plant moves nutrients from leaves to seeds. At boot to early heading stage of growth, brome hay can easily be in the 10 to 12% protein level. If harvest is delayed until milk stage or later, then quite frankly, brome hay is not adequate to meet the energy requirements of mature beef cows, which is what much of the brome hay is used for. Which means you're going to have to supplement with more expensive feed and roughage sources. So have the swather ready and once you see quite a few heads coming out, you need to be rolling. If you see that pollen "smoke" coming off a field, you're already too late! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

White Heads in Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This is the time of year that we often start to notice white heads showing up in wheat. Wheat will normally go from the traditional green color to a golden color in a slow and steady change. If it goes from green to just a little color change to white, then that wheat head or plant has died prematurely. We see some of this every year and the causes can be varied. Hot dry winds and dry soils can cause this - but I don't think we'll see that this year. Large areas dying this year are probably due to flooding damage and will be very easy to note simply by walking into the field. If you find a single head in a plant that turns white, grab it and pull. If it detaches from the plant quickly and easily it is likely caused by the wheat stem maggot. If you have part of a head that turns white it could be hail or it could be head scab aka fusarium head blight. We could see a fair amount of that this year. Look for pinkish orangish spores at the base of the glumes. If it's hail damage, there'll be evidence of impact and missing parts of the head. You may find lodged stems causing white heads and this could be fusarium root rot or even Hessian Fly. If you find scattered plants that are entirely dead, you are likely looking at take all. Take all is rarely seen in fields with good rotation or fields in continuous wheat for 20+ years. Fields in 3rd or 4th year wheat are liable to be the worst for take all. Bottom line here is it's important to know what's causing the white heads. Not because we can do anything now, but for future plans on what to do differently with next year's wheat crop! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Inoculation of soybeans

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Soybeans are big users of nitrogen. You can figure that for every bushel of soybeans you raise, the crop needs 3 to 4 pounds of nitrogen. Quite honestly, if we had to apply all the nitrogen fertilizer that it takes to grow a soybean crop, we may not be able to afford to raise soybeans like we do. But fortunately, there's that little thing called symbiosis where the soybean and a bacteria have figured out how to get along to everyone's benefit. Another thing to keep in mind is the neither the soybean nor the bacteria are native to the United States. In fields where there have never been soybeans grown before, failure to apply inoculant can reduce yields by 10 bushels per acre. Remember that soybeans are effective scavengers of soil nitrogen which is a good thing because we generally feel that the nodules on soybean roots can only provide 40 to 80% of the nitrogen needs of the plant! So in those studies where soybeans had never been grown, if there was little residual nitrogen left, I'm sure the yield difference would have been much more than 10 bushels per acre. I'm a firm believer that you just use soybean inoculant every year. Period. But if you are trying to save a few dollars per acre, here are some situations where I feel you MUST use inoculant. If it's been more than four years since you had soybeans in the field. If soil pH is below 5.5. The bacteria doesn't like acid soils. Fields where erosion has occurred since the last time beans had been grown or where soil organic matter is less than 1% and in fields that have had severe drought or flooding. So back to square one, just inoculate! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.