

Wheat seed planting depth

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We've had some early wheat go in the ground but the majority of the wheat planting is just getting ready to gear up. I know I've been talking a lot about it but I just continue to see so many problems with stand establishment because of poor seed placement. Obviously, or maybe not, this is a problem in no-till fields. When fields are clean tilled, we just don't have the problems. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that we don't run into this problem nearly as often in sorghum and corn stubble as we do in soybean stubble. Maybe that's because we plant a lot more wheat into soybean stubble than we do corn or sorghum. But none the less we seem to get areas of concentration of soybean residue and that's where we really see the issues. Wheat seed needs to be planted basically 1 to 1½ inches deep. One inch is probably the minimum and with today's semi-dwarf wheats 2 inches is probably the upper end. We have to have that soil depth between the seed and the soil surface to allow room for the crown of the wheat plant to develop so we can get that good root development that the wheat plant has to have. If you are planting in any residue, get off the tractor and go back and start digging to see where that seed is being placed. When you see you're going through some pretty good residue, stop and check. If that seed is under the residue but on top of the soil surface, you'll need to make adjustments. If the seed is one to two inches deep in the soil, you should be in good shape. If you can't find the seed at all, you'd better make sure you remembered to fill the drill! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Treat Cull Cows as a Revenue Source

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When most producers cull cows, they really don't think much about it. For whatever reason cows are culled out and taken to the sale barn for whatever they can get. But according to Farm Management Association figures, in any given year, cull cows account for almost 25% of the gross income for those beef herds. Now when do you suppose most cull cows are sold? Usually at the end of the grazing season which often means there's a glut in the market right then and the prices are probably at their historic lowest. So why not market them earlier in the year when cull cow markets are often higher. There can be a 20 to 30% seasonal swing in the value of cull cows across a year. If you know or suspect in late spring or early summer that you've got some cows to cull, and you probably have a pretty good idea which ones that are going to be, why not move them earlier, like mid August. If you're towards the end of the season, in the fall, when you preg check and figure out what you want to cull, instead of doing what everybody else is doing, sort those cows off, put them on a low input feeding program and hold them until prices rebound. Most producers usually have more hay than they need and couple that with a few pounds of grain a day and you can flesh out some of those cows pretty cheaply until the cull cow market rebounds. It all comes down to learning to look at things differently. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall Soil Sampling

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There is not enough soil testing being done on farms all across Kansas. No, I don't think we need to soil test every year. But every other year or maybe every third year is certainly in order. It's October and we are in harvest season. After that season is over take a look at your yield maps. If you are seeing large variations of yield within a field, it signals that something is going on and a soil test of those areas, compared to better areas may be in order. We may know that some area is sandier or maybe heavier or rockier which will certainly explain a lot of what we may be seeing. But if you aren't taking differential soil tests, how will you know? We don't do enough profile soil testing. I know that no one likes doing a 24 inch profile soil test, or even an 18", but if we really want to know what's going on with nitrogen, sulfur and chloride we have to. A six inch test just isn't going to cut it for those nutrients because we can get such stratification below 6 inches that we can miss significant levels of nitrogen especially. You certainly don't have to profile test all your crop fields. Seedling or established alfalfa and soybeans are not going to benefit from a profile test as we don't generally use nitrogen fertilizer on these crops. But wheat, grain sorghum and especially corn fields should really be profile tested on a regular basis. The final thing to keep in mind is that it is crucial that we get representative samples. You never know what's happened at any one particular spot in a field and that can skew your results. So if we sample in that one spot and base decisions on that, we could be in trouble. Try to get somewhere between 4 and 12 areas sampled to get good average readings! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Check pasture condition now

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In the next few weeks to a month there'll be a lot of you spending time in pastures getting cattle moved out. While you'll be focused on making sure that you get all the cows and calves out of the pasture, also take some time to look at the pasture and the condition that it is in. Right as the cattle are being moved out is the perfect time to evaluate condition. The first thing that I look at when I'm evaluating a pasture is how much grass is there and what kind of grass. Sometimes it looks like there's a lot of plant material out in those pasture but on closer examination it may be undesirable grasses like silver bluestem or maybe a lot of forbs that have exploded because of past overgrazing. Next check the uniformity of grazing. Cattle just don't spend a lot of time on side hills grazing so I expect those area to not be grazed as heavily. But if you have back corners that weren't grazed you may want to consider how to encourage more uniform grazing. This may mean moving salt or mineral to a lesser used area rather than right at the gate where it's convenient for you. Certainly also be looking for noxious weeds that may need treatment as well as areas where woody species are starting to dominate. Unless it's cedars, fire alone won't control them - a herbicide plan will need to be put together. Then also look at forbs and non woody broadleaf plants. As I say on a regular basis, increases in forbs aren't a problem, but are the sign of a problem which is usually overgrazing in certain areas. A plan to change stocking rate or move around grazing pressure may have to be developed! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Where are we headed with Dicamba resistant beans

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This winter is going to be very interesting as we watch the drama that I'm now calling Dicamba Drift Dilemma. The number of producers filing lawsuits is increasing daily. One state ag board is moving forward with a plan to ban all dicamba applications after April 15th which then prompted growers representing 1/3 of the bean acres in that state to sign a petition against that ban. I saw a lot of fields here in Kansas that were showing apparent drift damage. I've had rural homeowners talk about vegetable garden damage that is likely from dicamba. And I'm just sort of hunkering down and staying out of the middle of it because it is a no win situation. EPA is going to have to take a long hard look at this situation. Every state department of ag is going to have to evaluate this for themselves. I will be stunned if there aren't changes made to dicamba labels next year. So what should you do as you plan for your soybean planting for next year? For starters I would very seriously consider planting dicamba resistant beans in any field that may be next to another farmer's soybean fields. If you have a bean field that will be surrounded by your crops, I might not be so concerned. But protecting against drift should likely be paramount. I would start making serious plans for weed control that focuses more on preplant or pre-emerge herbicide applications. There were some clean fields around this year, it can be done. Then take advantage of producer meetings to help decide which herbicides to use. We'll be hosting soybean production meeting in mid-winter so stay tuned for that. This meeting will talk a lot about herbicides and insect control, so you will want to attend! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.