Consider Tissue Testing Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Next week I'm going to talk about soil potassium and how it's just plain weird how it acts in the soil. But for now, I'm going to tell you that we are slowly, or not so slowly, mining potassium out of our soils. I've watched K levels drop over the last 40 years. Soybeans can be very sensitive to low K levels and sometimes soil tests aren't doing an accurate job or predicting deficiency. If you've had fields that have disappointed you in soybean production in the past we may want to consider whole plant tissue testing at the V4 growth stage. If K levels are below 1.8%, and especially below 1.6%, then a broadcast potassium application can still help. The soybean growth phases from 40 to 80 days post planting are very crucial for potassium uptake. By testing at V4, you've got time to make applications and make a difference! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Are Nutrient Ratios Valid?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm on several Facebook pages for growing things. I often see growers talking about correct nutrient ratios. I occasionally hear crop producers talking about nutrient ratios that for every X you need a certain amount of Y. Some people treat this like gospel. The thing to keep in mind is that most legitimate fertility experts will tell you that there isn't any relevence to those ratios with the exception, possibly of, magnesium and potassium. Unless you get into some really weird soils or into gardens with ridiculously high nutrient levels, you don't need to worry about ratios but rather look at how much of a nutrient is in the soil and does it meet the needs of what's being grown. Start with a good soil test that is representative of the field, and then we can fertilize to raise the levels of anything that is deficient. It is that simple. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Herbicide Updates for 2022

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We had an agronomy update last week with a lot of information you'll be hearing about in coming days. One of those was on herbicides. First of all, no really new herbicides - more premixes with different names but the same old products. Now, for dicamba, atrazine, glyphosate and paraquat - there are likely several changes coming on several fronts. Dicamba use may becoming more restrictive. Atrazine changes may focus on endangered species - not much impact for us. Glyphosate some changes also. Paraquat will likely have some training changes so you only have to do it every three years. EPA just recently released the results of an indepth evaluation and said that there was no clear link between paraquat use or exposure and Parkinson's Disease. As to the issue of availability, that's the wild card and more on that tomorrow! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cold Weather Herbicide Storage

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the things that our weeds specialist said at update last week was that nobody really knows what the availability of any herbicides will be. Because of that she recommended that if you had the chance to take delivery of product to do so IF you have someplace to properly store it. Dry products aren't a problem - put it in any secure building. Liquids are another story though. Each label needs to be checked for specific instructions but most liquids talk about storing above 40 degrees but below 90 degrees. If you do not have somewhere to store it that will stay above freezing you are just going to have to hope that your supplier can get it for you in the spring. I will also re-emphasize the importance of having a secure place to store it. The black market is very active for herbicides right now so just be cautious! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Manure as Fertilizer

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For the past 50 years most producers that have livestock have looked at manure as a situation that involved disposal as the primary objective. Well, with fertilizer prices climbing to a dollar per pound of unit N, we need to switch that mindset from disposal to nutrient source. We often think of manure for nitrogen source but because phosphorus levels are often higher than nitrogen levels, we need to target applications rates to meet the phosphorus needs of our crop and then supplement with additional commercial nitrogen sources to meet the N need. We have limits in Kansas on how high phosphorus levels can be built in soils. Large livestock feeding operations have been facing this issue for years. We have poultry litter coming into our area from out of state so if you are contacted, give me a call so we can talk options! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.