

Making Hay in the Rain

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Well, the weather has not been very helpful for getting hay swathed or baled. It's looking more and more like first and second cutting alfalfa may come off at the same time. Several years ago researchers in Kentucky did some extensive studies with alfalfa of swathing and letting it get rained on and comparing that to waiting until it stopped raining. What they found out was basically if alfalfa was close to being ready to cut and the delay wasn't going to be more than about 3 days, then wait. If it might be longer than three days they found that loss of quality from letting it stand get over mature was worse than it getting rained on. Grass hay is less of an issue getting rained on because the leaves aren't so easily lost. But the bottom line is that to make good hay you've got to start with a well timed cut, otherwise you're hurting yourself! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Summertime temperatures and excessive rain will guarantee at least two things - mushrooms and mosquitoes. We can't do much about the mushrooms, but we can reduce mosquito populations by eliminating as many breeding sites as possible. Mosquitoes like shallow water and shallow water with vegetation like a very wet ditch, is even better. In weather like this it only takes about a week from egg to a biting adult. Pet water dishes, bird baths, literally anything that holds water for a week can breed mosquitoes. Drain as many of these OR change the water every 4 or 5 days to get rid of mosquito larva. For areas on your property that you can't drain consider using mosquito dunks or bits. These biological control products are specifically meant to control mosquitoes without harming desirable little aquatic critters! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Crucial to Test Hay Quality

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Earlier this week I was talking about delayed hay harvest due to the wet weather. Whether we're out of this wet spell is yet to be seen but it was nice to see the sun last week. But what this kind of delayed harvest points out is how important it is going to be to be testing quality of the hay harvested this spring. A two week delay in bromegrass harvest can drop crude protein over 50%. And when many producers are still not swathing bromegrass soon enough this delay is going to be quite damaging to quality. Alfalfa isn't much better with crude protein dropping 40% from beginning bloom to late or full bloom. Likewise, TDN drops over 10 points from early to late, and non-digestible fiber takes an equal jump up. You need to know this when you start to feed so borrow the office's hay probe and lets do some testing! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Stress on Young Corn

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You probably noticed last week, when the sun finally started coming out, that a lot of the corn just didn't look all that great. And that's no surprise! May brought temperatures down into the 30s, excessive and at times ongoing rain and cloudy weather, which of course led to saturated soils. The outcome of all of that is that the corn has taken a hit and development has been slowed. We may still be seeing a little bit of low temperature stress, which often shows up as a water soaked looking base of the plant when it's split open. But the bigger issue is likely going to come from loss of nitrogen. Excessive rain can push nitrate down in the soil profile. It can also cause loss of N from denitrification simply from having saturated soils for a week. If you're thinking of applying a little more N, do it sooner rather than later! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

White Heads in Wheat Fields

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was out in numerous wheat fields recently looking at fungicide efficacy, impacts of wet soils, and just all around scouting for disease and other issues. I started to see more white heads than I'd like to see. White heads can come from many causes. Individual dead plants often indicate take all disease. Individual white heads on otherwise living plants can be wheat stem maggot and the dead head will pull out of the plant easily. Just part of a head dying could be hail, but the fields that I was in more often appeared to be fusarium head blight, better known as scab. In these cases look for an orangeish pink growth on the lower part of the glume. But what I was seeing the most was large areas where plants were dying and this was simply drowning plants. Take time to evaluate and record what's happening for future considerations. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.