

Monitor Worms in Sorghum Heads

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As the sorghum crop moves along and starts heading out we need to start checking it for evidence of sorghum headworm. We talk about headworm like it's one species, when in reality there are several different species that will feed on developing sorghum seeds. The sorghum plants are vulnerable to damage from the time the seed starts to form until it hits about milk stage. We know that an average of one worm per head, across a field, will take about 5% of the yield. Which, given current new crop price bids, is about the economic threshold for treatment. As those heads emerge and flower it's time to start going through and checking for headworms. Start tapping on heads or carefully looking. If there's one in there, you'll find it. If you aren't sure if you need to spray, give me a call. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Garden Webworms in Soybeans

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Garden webworms are an insect pest of many garden plants and soybeans as well. They are leaf skeletonizers and the feeding damage can look pretty concerning! The webworms also, as their name implies, will produce a fair amount of webbing, often enveloping several soybean plants together. While it can look disconcerting, treatment is rarely needed. I can think of two fields over the past 20 years that I suggested spraying. Normally their damage occurs late enough in the growing season that any loss of leaf area will not affect yield. Right now we are likely in between generations. You may find webbing or evidence of feeding but few active caterpillars. There should be one more generation and late planted or drought stressed beans may have some risk. If you aren't sure, then give me a call and we'll look at it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Sorghum Aphids

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Sorghum aphids, the critter previously known as sugarcane aphids, have been detected in south central and central Kansas. Sorghum producers need to be out scouting now. The rule of thumb is to walk 25 feet into the field and then walk 50 feet of row looking for heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies. Do this in four locations per field. If you have a lot of johnsongrass around the field, check those plants as well. If more than 20% of all the plants you looked at meet the heavy honeydew and established colonies threshold, then treatment is likely needed. IF you were seeing abundant beneficial insects I may be slower to pull the trigger. Also, once the plants reach soft dough to dough stage, raise the threshold to 30%. The good news is that sorghum aphids are usually long gone and the honeydew dried up by harvest! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Poisonous Plants in the Pasture

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I have a book on my office bookshelves called "Plants Poisonous to Livestock". It's nearly 60 years old. It has a lot of really interesting information in it and some of it that the authors even admit is of questionable validity. Livestock owners, especially horse owners, are, and should be, concerned about potentially poisonous plants. But the problem is, many times the reports are second hand and while they may have seen an animal eat plant A, and then it died, how do we know it was that plant? There's also a great deal of resistance to intentionally feeding toxic plants to animals to see what happens. There's certain plants in pastures we know are poisonous and should be removed. But there are also a lot of plants that might be poisonous, but if animals are eating those, they are desperate for food. Use common sense and good nutrition!. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Plant Variety Protection Act

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. There is a law known as the plant variety protection act. Virtually all modern day crop varieties, and many ornamentals, are protected under the PVPA. It really comes into play when it comes to wheat because that's about the one crop that producers routinely still keep back seed. If a producer buys certified seed then they may keep the seed back and replant it FOR THEIR OWN USE. That is legal. That producer can not sell it to their neighbor however. If you buy any bulk wheat seed from a person that doesn't have proof that it was certified, the transaction is likely illegal and both the buyer and the seller are breaking the law. Be advised, though, that if the seed is also protected by patented traits like Clearfield wheat, then it becomes illegal for that producer to keep seed back. Know the law, know your seller, and stay legal! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.