

Pasture Burning Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. What a difference a month can make, or maybe even just a couple of weeks! Last week we had a pretty general inch and a half of rain, maybe more, across the region. That, coupled with some of the precipitation earlier in the month has done a great job of starting to recharge the soil moisture profile. We've still got a ways to go but we now have adequate soil moisture reserves to insure that we will have good native grass growth if we burn which is what we like to see in the flint hills. If you were hesitating to burn pastures, hesitate no more. Naturally we still need to have the green light from the local authorities, and the right weather conditions on the day of the burn, but lack of soil moisture is no longer a concern. Also remember that the Flint Hills Smoke Protocols go into effect on April 1st! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Get Cattle Off of Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have been grazing cattle on wheat AND intend to harvest a grain crop, it's time to start moving cattle off the wheat.

The wonderful rain we had last week and some warmer temperatures and sunshine are really kicking the wheat into gear and first hollow stem, which we used to call jointing, is moving right along. In simple terms, what this means is that wheat heads are developing and moving above ground where cattle can start grazing them off if they stay on the wheat much longer. Jointing is also a critical time for weed control especially if you use any herbicide that contains dicamba.

Dicamba needs to be applied prior to jointing to minimize risk of deformed heads. We used to see a lot of this but many wheat growers have switched to other herbicides. But it's still an economical treatment so be cautious! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Time to Burn Down Marestalk

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've spent a lot of time over the years trying to help producers get marestalk under control and one of the key factors in that is to treat it before it starts to bolt. As a rosette or very early bolting stage we can get pretty good control. Marestalk is likely the biggest risk in soybeans where we are often later in performing herbicide burndown - often at a time when we will have poor control of marestalk. Now is the time to get out there and get marestalk burned down and then a short lived residual to help keep things clean. 2,4-D and especially dicamba are excellent burndown choices and by spraying now, we have plenty of time for them to dissipate prior to planting. For residual herbicides I would consider Classic, Canopy, First Rate, Valor, Sharpen, Optill, Verdict and even metribuzin. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Mustards and Henbit Growing Rapidly

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Mustards and henbit are winter annual broadleaf weeds that are frequently found in wheat fields and also stubble fields of all kinds. Henbit can turn a field into a solid purple haze in short order and in wheat fields all of these really need to be controlled and the sooner the better. If you weren't out walking your fields a month ago looking for tiny little weeds, you may wonder where the heck all those blossoms came from. While dicamba is a good control option, you need to get it on real soon. In stubble fields that will go to something else later this spring we can have a lot of debate as to how much moisture use and yield loss we may have with these. They'll be dying down by the time we plant even corn in a few more weeks. I'm a firm believer, though, that we should try to reduce seed production, so let's be hitting these soon! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Insect Pest Management Bulletins Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Did you know that in any given year, the five major crops in this state can be challenged by over 70 different insect species. This may include the same insect pest on five different crops, but still - seriously! The thing to remember with insect pests though is that before we treat them they need to get to a population level where the damage they'd do if left unchecked will cost more in yield than the expense to treat for them. I see a lot of insecticides applied every year, just in case. This raises a lot of issues and concerns. Fortunately we have insect control bulletins available for our crops in Kansas and they've all been recently updated. These guides will tell you what time of year each pest may show up, what population level justifies treatment and then recommendations on insecticides that are effective as well as application rates. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.