

Fall Armyworm Activity is Low!

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We all remember the problems we had last summer and fall with those fall armyworms. They caused a real problem for everything from lawns to wheat fields. We have fall armyworms every year, but most years they aren't really a problem. This armyworm does not overwinter in Kansas, in fact they overwinter in southern Texas and Mexico and have to fly north arriving in the summer. The number of fall armyworms that we have here in Kansas is greatly dependent on how many develop to the south and move north. Last year, there were a lot of fall armyworms in Texas and those flew north and laid a lot of fall armyworm eggs, hence the problem! Now, for 2022, due to the weather and dry conditions, there are few fall armyworm in Texas and we currently do not expect a fall armyworm issue this year! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

What's the Real Problem

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are a society that jumps to conclusions. In agriculture, we do it all the time. The seedling wheat isn't doing well, must be herbicide carryover. The alfalfa seems to be going backwards, must be armyworms or alfalfa weevil. It really only becomes a problem if you stop right there and proceed straight to a treatment before you know what's happening. I see it in homeowners in town also with lawn and garden issues. We tend to jump to cause and effect. While looking at something not growing right we see something else and that must be the issue. Figuring out what the real problem is may take some time and it may require us to acknowledge that we MAY have messed something up. Sometimes we need to slow down, call in the experts, and realize that the problem may be more complex than we first thought! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Alfalfa Going Backward?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Early in the alfalfa season, which is basically anytime before the first cutting, if the alfalfa doesn't seem to be growing well, we immediately assume that it is alfalfa weevil. However, there are many other things that could be happening. This year, we had cowpea aphids early in the season. Mainly people commented that it looked like there was tar on the plants because if you reached down to it you wound up crushing these blackish aphids and you got that sticky junk all over your hands. We're also had less sunlight than normal and maybe some cooler temperatures than recent years so the alfalfa is just growing slower. We can see cutworm issues in the spring as well. Basically, if there are areas in your alfalfa that just don't seem to be doing well, give me a call as there have been some unusual pests showing up out west this spring! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Make a Grazing Plan Now

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I suspect that most grazing plans aren't written down and pretty much amount to - what we did last year, and the year before that and the year before that. Our grazing plans are based on tradition. We need to start spending time really writing things down and looking at options, looking at changes in pasture condition from year to year. We need to be weighing our cows and calves going in and coming out of pasture so we know that we are calculating forage needs correctly which we have to do to properly determine stocking rates. Creating a good, comprehensive grazing plan, on paper, takes time. And it needs to be on paper because that means that you took the time to really work through it and create it. Then by writing it down, we have something to be held accountable for and something to measure progress by. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Have Contingency Plans for Pastures

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday we talked about truly making a grazing plan that goes beyond tradition. Part of that plan needs to be contingency plans including what happens if we have a drought. Even in light of recent rains, it's been dry and it could get drier. Grass growth is very limited right now due to the weather, but what happens when it's July 1 and the growth is limited because of lack of rain. Lack of rain means lack of grass growth. Cattle need to eat something. Do you have a "what if" plan in place or are you just going to go with the approach of we'll cross that bridge when we come to it? There are always options such as early weaning of calves, or moving part of the herd to a drylot setting and start feeding them. Perhaps it's planting some summer annual forage to use for feed. But it's better to start planning now, than later! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.