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Research and Extension

## Extension Agronomy

# eUpdate

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*03/13/2020*

These e-Updates are a regular weekly item from K-State Extension Agronomy and Kathy Gehl, Agronomy eUpdate Editor. All of the Research and Extension faculty in Agronomy will be involved as sources from time to time. If you have any questions or suggestions for topics you'd like to have us address in this weekly update, contact Kathy Gehl, 785-532-3354 kgehl@ksu.edu, or Dalas Peterson, Extension Agronomy State Leader and Weed Management Specialist 785-532-0405 dpeterso@ksu.edu.

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## 1. World of Weeds: Common sunflower

This next article in the World of Weeds series highlights common sunflower, also known as annual sunflower or wild sunflower (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Common sunflower (mature plant). Image by Howard Schwartz, Bugwood.org.**

### Ecology of common sunflower

Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) is native to North America, although it is not thought to be the direct source of cultivated sunflower, which was reintroduced from Russia. Common sunflower is a summer annual that emerges relatively early (mid-March) and can be found in fields and roadsides throughout the continental United States. Other closely related species, including prairie sunflower, sawtooth sunflower, stiff sunflower, and Jerusalem artichoke are generally not as widely distributed.

Common sunflower usually grows at least three feet tall, but can reach up to ten feet or more in height. The thick stem is covered hairs, making it feel rough (Figure 2). Leaves are oblong to somewhat heart-shaped with toothed margins. Both the upper and lower leaf surfaces have hairs that make them feel rough and the upper surface has three prominent veins. Leaves are opposite on the lower portions of the stem, but become alternate in the upper portions of the plant.



**Figure 2. Common sunflower stem (top) and seedling (bottom). Images by Phil Westra and Steve Dewey, Bugwood.org**

A single plant will produce about 20-35 flower heads in late summer. The yellow ray flowers are about 1 to 2 inches long and surround red to brown disk flowers that are held in a receptacle that is about 1.5 inches across. Seeds are produced inside fruits called *achenes*, which are wedge-shaped

and about 0.25 inches long with colors ranging from white to gray to brown with black mottling.

Common sunflower seeds are eaten by many kinds of birds and small mammals. It has some forage value when young, but has the potential to accumulate nitrates. Common sunflower produces allelochemicals that inhibit the growth of other plants. Native Americans are said to have used all parts of the plants and modern research suggests some potential for medicinal uses.

### Management

There are several herbicides that provide excellent control of common sunflower, many of which contain 2,4-D, atrazine, glyphosate, or a Group 2 (ALS-inhibiting) herbicide. In some situations, the effectiveness of an ALS-inhibiting herbicide may be reduced due to herbicide resistance. Some effective products are listed in Table 1, with an indication of crops in which they can be used. Remember, additional information can be found in the [KSRE 2020 Chemical Weed Control Guide](#) and always consult the product label.

**Table 1. List of effective herbicides, organized by agronomic crop, for control of common sunflower.**

| Herbicide      | Corn | Cotton | Grain sorghum | Soybean | Wheat |
|----------------|------|--------|---------------|---------|-------|
| PRE-EMERGENCE  |      |        |               |         |       |
| Acuron         | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Canopy         |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Envive         |      |        |               | X       |       |
| FirstRate      |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Resicor        | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Scepter        |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Sharpen        |      |        | X             | X       |       |
| Sonic          |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Surveil        |      |        |               | X       |       |
| TripleFLEX     | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Trivence       |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Valor XLT      |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Zidua PRO      |      |        |               | X       |       |
| POST-EMERGENCE |      |        |               |         |       |
| 2,4-D          | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Agility SG     |      |        |               |         | X     |
| Ally+2,4-D     |      |        | X             |         | X     |
| Armezon        | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Atrazine       | X    |        | X             |         |       |
| Basaagran      |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Bromoxynil     | X    |        | X             |         | X     |
| Brozine        | X    |        | X             |         |       |
| Capreno        | X    |        |               |         |       |
| Carnivore      |      |        |               |         | X     |
| Classic        |      |        |               | X       |       |
| Dicamba        |      |        | X             |         | X     |

|                       |    |    |   |    |   |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|----|---|
| Dicamba+atrazine      | X  |    | X |    |   |
| DiFlexx DUO           | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Enlist One            | X* | X* |   | X* |   |
| Enlist Duo            | X* | X* |   | X* |   |
| Finness               |    |    |   |    | X |
| Firstrate             |    |    |   | X  |   |
| Glyphosate            | X* |    |   | X* |   |
| Halex GT              | X* |    |   |    |   |
| Kochiavore            | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Laudis                | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Liberty               | X* | X* |   | X* |   |
| Mesotrione + atrazine | X  |    | X |    |   |
| Permit                | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Raptor                |    |    |   | X  |   |
| Shieldex              | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Starane NXT           | X  |    |   |    |   |
| Synchrony XP          |    |    |   | X  |   |
| WideMatch             | X  |    |   |    |   |
| XtendiMax             |    | X* |   | X* |   |
| Yukon                 | X  |    |   |    |   |

\*Herbicide-resistant hybrids/varieties only.

### References:

*Weeds of the Great Plains* by Stubbendieck et al., *Weeds of the Midwestern United States and Central Canada* edited by C.T. Bryson and M.S. DeFelice, *Weeds of the West* edited by T.D. Whitson

Stay tuned for the next World of Weeds article coming out in April! Feel free to send Dr. Lancaster or Kathy Gehl ([kgehl@ksu.edu](mailto:kgehl@ksu.edu)) an email if you have a special request for a future article.

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## 2. Update on new herbicides for Kansas crops in 2020

Recently, the popular press has reported that Bayer is developing a yet-to-be-named post-emergence herbicide with a new mode of action with anticipated commercialization in about 10 years. However, new herbicides for use in Kansas during 2020 are combinations of existing herbicides. Products that have gained approval for use in agronomic crops in 2020 are discussed in this article, as well as some products that anticipate approval for 2020. Herbicide labels supersede information provided here. Always read and follow label directions.

### **Alite27 (isoxaflutole)**

Group: 27  
Crop: isoxaflutole-resistant soybean (GT27 soybean)  
Timing: pre-emergence  
Rate: 2-3 fl oz/A

Alite 27 will be the isoxaflutole formulation registered for use in GT27 or LLGT27 soybean. It should be tank-mixed with other registered soybean herbicides to control key weeds such as **Palmer amaranth, kochia, and marestail**. Alite 27 is currently in the final phases of being registered for use in Kansas; but use restrictions similar to Balance Flex, an isoxaflutole formulation currently registered for use in corn in Kansas, are expected. It will be important to check location-specific requirements that protect groundwater resources prior to application.

### **AuthorityEdge (sulfentrazone + pyroxasulfone)**

Group: 14 + 15  
Crop: soybean and sunflower  
Timing: fall, pre-plant, pre-emergence  
Rate: 5.9-15.7 fl oz/acre (soybean)

AuthorityEdge is a new product based on sulfentrazone (Authority, Spartan). It will control key weeds including **Palmer amaranth, kochia, crabgrass, and johnsongrass**. Use higher application rates in fine-textured soils with pH below 7.2 and organic matter greater than 3%. AuthorityEdge may be applied in one or two applications per year.

### **Pixxaro EC (halauxifen-methyl + fluroxypyr)**

Group: 4  
Crop: wheat  
Timing: 2-leaf to flag leaf  
Rate: 6 fl oz/A

Pixxaro is a mixture of Elevore and Starane that will control **kochia, marestail, flixweed**, and other species post-emergence.

### **Purpetuo (pyroxasulfone + flumiclorac)**

Group: 15 + 14

Crop: corn, soybean

Timing: pre-emergence, post-emergence

Rate: 6 fl oz/A

Purpetuo is a mixture of Zidua and Resource that has received US EPA approval and is expected to be approved for use in Kansas during 2020. It is designed for residual control **Palmer amaranth** and **waterhemp** in soybean.

### **Roundup Xtend (glyphosate + dicamba)**

Group: 9 + 15

Crop: dicamba-resistant soybean and cotton (Xtend soybean and Xtend cotton)

Timing: pre-plant, pre-emergence, post-emergence

Rate: **64 fl oz/A**

Roundup Xtend is a mixture of glyphosate and dicamba in a low-volatility formulation. It will control a wide spectrum of weed species, including **Palmer amaranth and marestail**. The label is still awaiting US EPA approval. Once approved, it will carry requirements and restrictions similar to Xtendimax, Engenia, and FeXapan.

### **Tavium (dicamba + S-metolachlor)**

Group: 4 + 15

Crop: dicamba-resistant soybean and cotton (Xtend soybean and Xtend cotton)

Timing: pre-plant, pre-emergence, post-emergence

Rate: 56.5 fl oz/A

Tavium is a mixture of S-metolachlor (Dual Magnum) and a low-volatility formulation of dicamba. It can be used once pre-emergence and once post-emergence in a growing season. When applied prior to weed emergence, it will control troublesome weeds like **Palmer amaranth and grasses**. Postemergence applications will control only broadleaved weed such as **Palmer amaranth, kochia, and marestail**. Tavium carries the same requirements and restrictions as Engenia, FeXapan, or XtendiMax.

In addition, new herbicide-resistant crops continue to be commercialized. Bayer anticipates approval of **XtendFlex** soybean for 2020. These varieties will be resistant to glyphosate, dicamba, and glufosinate (Liberty). Dicamba products used in-crop will be limited to XtendiMax, Engenia, FeXapan, and Tavium.

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### 3. First hollow stem update: March 11, 2020

Cattle should be removed from wheat pastures when the crop reaches first hollow stem (FHS). Grazing past this stage can severely affect wheat yields (for a full explanation, please refer to the eUpdate article "[Optimal time to remove cattle from wheat pastures: First hollow stem](#)").

#### **First hollow stem update**

In order to screen for FHS during this important time in the growing season, the K-State Extension Wheat and Forages crew measures FHS on a weekly basis in 28 different commonly grown wheat varieties in Kansas. The varieties are in a September-sown replicated trial at the South Central Experiment Field near Hutchinson.

Ten stems are split open per variety per replication (Figure 1), for a total of 40 stems monitored per variety. The average length of hollow stem is reported for each variety in Table 1. As of March 11, 2020, none of the varieties had yet reached first hollow stem but all varieties had started to show minor stem elongation.



**Figure 1. Ten main wheat stems were split open per replication per variety to estimate first hollow stem for this report, for a total of 40 stems split per variety. Photo by Romulo Lollato, K-State Research and Extension.**

**Table 1. Length of hollow stem measured March 11, 2020 of 28 wheat varieties sown mid-September 2019 at the South Central Experiment Field near Hutchinson. The critical FHS length is 1.5 cm (about a half-inch or the diameter of a dime). The least significant difference for varieties to be considered statistically different was 0.23 cm.**

| Variety            | First hollow stem length (cm) |          |           |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|
|                    | 2/25/2020                     | 3/2/2020 | 3/11/2020 |
| 09BC308-14-16      | 0.07                          | 0.25     | 0.62      |
| AM Cartwright      | 0.23                          | 0.31     | 0.60      |
| AM Eastwood        | 0.11                          | 0.19     | 0.41      |
| Bentley            | 0.11                          | 0.34     | 0.68      |
| Bob Dole           | 0.06                          | 0.15     | 0.54      |
| Doublestop CL Plus | 0.06                          | 0.22     | 0.46      |
| Gallagher          | 0.14                          | 0.33     | 0.58      |
| Green Hammer       | 0.05                          | 0.16     | 0.52      |
| Guardian           | 0.04                          | 0.18     | 0.70      |
| KS Dallas          | 0.11                          | 0.29     | 0.72      |
| KS Silverado       | 0.12                          | 0.26     | 0.72      |
| KS Western Star    | 0.11                          | 0.29     | 0.64      |
| LCS Valiant        | 0.07                          | 0.29     | 0.47      |
| Long Branch        | 0.28                          | 0.43     | 1.15      |
| Paradise           | 0.08                          | 0.34     | 0.60      |
| Rock Star          | 0.08                          | 0.27     | 0.57      |
| Showdown           | 0.12                          | 0.32     | 0.67      |
| Smith's Gold       | 0.11                          | 0.28     | 0.49      |
| SY Achieve CL2     | 0.12                          | 0.28     | 0.70      |
| SY Wolverine       | 0.14                          | 0.23     | 0.66      |
| TAM205             | 0.08                          | 0.29     | 0.78      |
| WB4269             | 0.10                          | 0.22     | 0.53      |
| WB4303             | 0.09                          | 0.21     | 0.51      |
| WB4595             | 0.21                          | 0.33     | 0.68      |
| WB4699             | 0.01                          | 0.21     | 0.51      |
| WB4792             | 0.11                          | 0.36     | 0.86      |
| Whistler           | 0.06                          | 0.32     | 0.64      |
| Zenda              | 0.08                          | 0.28     | 0.63      |

While none of the varieties had yet reached first hollow stem as of March 11, there were statistical differences among the varieties evaluated and these differences tend to increase over time. Thus, we will report first hollow stem during the next few weeks again until all varieties are past this stage. Additionally, first hollow stem is generally achieved within a few days from when the stem starts to elongate, so we advise producers to closely monitor their wheat pastures at this time.

The intention of this report is to provide producers an update on the progress of first hollow stem development in different wheat varieties. Producers should use this information as a guide, but it is extremely important to monitor FHS from an ungrazed portion of each individual wheat pasture to

take the decision of removing cattle from wheat pastures.

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## 4. Managing spring-planted cover crops for grazing

The following is a summary of “Managing Spring Planted Cover Crops for Livestock Grazing under Dryland Conditions in the High Plains Region”, a fact sheet produced in collaboration with extension specialists and research scientists at K-State, Colorado State University, and University of Nebraska. The comprehensive publication details recommended practices for species selection, adjusting stocking rates, and grazing management. The entire fact sheet can be viewed and downloaded at <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3443.pdf>.

### Quick Facts

- Cool-season species should be chosen for spring planted cover crops to optimize growth and take advantage of winter and early spring moisture.
- Cool-season grasses tend to dominate, often to the detriment of other species, when planting cover crop mixtures in the spring.
- Yield variability is high when growing cover crops under dryland conditions in the High Plains Region ranging from under 1,000 lbs/ac in dry years to almost 5,000 lb/ac in wet years.
- Stocking rates must be flexible because of the large year-to-year variability in cover crop productivity.
- Spring planted cover crops can provide an average of 30 to 45 days of grazing.
- Start grazing spring planted cover crops when they reach 6 to 8 inches of growth to take advantage of their high nutrient content and palatability.

### Selection of Species

Determining what to plant can be a daunting task with all of the varied species available for use as cover crops. For Kansas and Nebraska producers, local Land Grant Universities and the Midwest Cover Crops Council have developed a [decision tool](#) to help select species based on specified goals. When cover crops are grazed, one needs to choose species that will not only benefit soil health but will also be palatable and safe as forage for livestock. Fortunately, many of the species currently recommended for use as cover crops are also good for forage production. Factors such as nutritive content and potential toxicities must be considered.

While a number of potential problems can occur with various forages, most can be managed. The most frequent problem is the accumulation of nitrates that is common with oats and brassicas but can occur in a variety of species under certain growing and management conditions. Prussic acid is another toxicity to beware of when grazing, particularly with sorghums, but these species are less common in spring planted mixtures. Refer to publications on nitrate ([CSU](#) or [KSU](#) fact sheets) and prussic acid ([CSU](#) or [KSU](#) fact sheets) toxicities for more information. For a more complete overview of forage crops with potential toxicities, please see the publication [Grazing Management: Toxic Plants](#).

For spring planted cover crops, most, if not all, of the species planted should be classified as cool-season in order to be able to plant early and take advantage of winter and early spring moisture. Species that fall into this category include the small grains (e.g. wheat, barley, oats, triticale, and cereal rye), brassicas (e.g. turnip, rapeseed/canola, and radish), and legumes (e.g. field/winter peas, winter lentils, vetch, and sweetclover).

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Complex mixtures of 6 or more species, often referred to as “cocktails,” are commonly recommended. The benefits of cocktails relative to single species or simple mixtures of 2 to 4 species depend on your specific management goals. Competitive cool-season grass species tend to be the highest biomass producers, which can optimize weed control and forage production. Mixtures are often used for benefits other than biomass production, such as providing nitrogen fixation by including legumes or soil pest suppression by including brassicas. From a grazing perspective, mixtures can produce forage with a range of palatability that can provide benefits and limitations.

### **Variability in Forage Production**

Forage productivity will vary from year-to-year under dryland conditions, which makes this one of the biggest challenges facing producers that graze cover crops in the High Plains Region because stocking rates will need to be adjusted annually.

Producers have several options to manage this variability in forage production. A flexible herd size where animals can be added or subtracted based on a given year’s productivity is the ideal situation. If it is difficult to adjust herd size, then the number of days a field can be grazed will have to be shortened or lengthened to achieve residue goals. In reality, expect to graze spring planted cover crops for about 30 days in most years. This resource should be viewed as supplemental forage during the late spring and early summer to help relieve dependence on other forage resources such as native rangeland and baled hay. In most years, native pasture growth is sufficient for turn-out when cool-season cover crops near maturity. High stocking rates can help suppress stem elongation and heading, but producers need to be careful to not overgraze and leave sufficient residue for soil health benefits.

As a final note, in years with minimal precipitation and forage productivity (i.e. ~1,000 lbs/ac or less), the best choice might be to not graze at all if your primary goal is soil protection. Ideally, you want to maintain a minimum of 30% ground cover, and approximately 1,000 lbs/ac is needed to achieve that goal.

### **Grazing Management**

When it comes to managing grazing of cover crops, numerous options can be considered. The ultimate strategy that is chosen will be influenced by your overarching goal(s) for the cover crop. Cover crops are generally grown for more reasons than just achieving high levels of harvest efficiency (i.e. percent utilization of available forage) as you would if this were a dedicated forage crop. You want to leave enough residue behind to maintain most of the benefits associated with planting cover crops (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Example of grazing and trampling impacts when predominantly cool-season grain cover crops are grazed during the heading stage. Regrowth is minimal and utilization is light (<30%) at this point, but trampling has left more than the target minimum of 30% ground cover.**

Grazing management options include:

- Continuous grazing: Calculate a stocking rate based on the estimated yield and put the whole herd in one large field to graze. Advantages associated with this system of grazing are that no fences are moved and only one water source is needed (i.e. labor and inputs are minimal). However, if the field is large, livestock will tend to overgraze the forage closest to the water source while underutilizing the forage farthest from the water, unless you are able to move the watering location. Harvest efficiency will generally be around 30% with continuous grazing.
- Rotational grazing: A large field is divided into two or more smaller units, or paddocks, and the animals are rotated from one paddock to the next. This is also a good option that has some advantages and disadvantages. The more paddocks that the field is divided into, the higher the stocking density (i.e. number of animals per acre). Maintaining residue levels and minimizing soil compaction are two issues to consider with this method. The need to move fences every day or every few days and how to handle watering the animals are two of the biggest hurdles to overcome that keep many producers from practicing rotational grazing.
- Strip grazing: Similar to rotational grazing where a temporary fence is set up to allow animals access to one to a few days' worth of feed but differs in that there is no back fence and animals can graze both fresh, residual, and regrowth forage. This method is convenient for watering animals as the fence can be set up so they have continuous access to a single water point. One drawback is increased compaction near the water source. Unlike rotational grazing, little regrowth accumulates when strip grazing because animals will continually search out and graze any new growth in the previously grazed strips.

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Once you have settled on a method of grazing, the next decision you need to make is when to start grazing your cover crop. If you are grazing steers and heifers and your goal is to achieve a given level of weight gain, then you need to start early to take advantage of high forage quality. The mixes we have been using for spring planted cover crops tend to be dominated by cool-season cereal grains like oats and barley. Once these species achieve 6 to 8 inches of growth, you should think seriously about starting to graze (Figure 2). Alternatively, some producers are more concerned about meeting their biomass goals for soil health and delay the start of grazing until plants are fairly mature.



**Figure 2. The above photo illustrates the proper time to start grazing (6 to 8 inches).**

### **Determining Stocking Rates**

Several key pieces of information are needed to estimate a stocking rate. The first is an estimate of the forage yield your field will produce during the period it will be grazed on a dry matter basis. How much forage will be consumed each day will depend on animal body weight and forage quality. For green and growing forages, intake will run from 2.5 to 3% of body weight on a dry matter basis. Another key input is the percent utilization desired. In dryland systems, 30% is a conservative starting point unless it appears to be an excellent moisture year with above average yields. Calculations can be made to estimate days of grazing for a given number of animals or the number of animals for a set grazing period. A [Carrying Capacity Calculator](#) is also available to help with these calculations. Example calculations to determine stocking rates are detailed in the full publication linked in the first paragraph of this article.

### **Example Timeline**

An example timeline is shown below with suggested planting, start grazing, and end grazing dates for spring planted cover crops. This timeline will allow cover crops to effectively utilize winter and spring moisture to produce the highest yields possible under dryland conditions while providing livestock with high quality forage.



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## 5. 2020 Kansas Leopold Conservation Award call for nominations

Since 2015, the Sand County Foundation, in partnership with the Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK) and the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, has recognized a private land owner and/or family in Kansas who exemplifies the land ethic that Aldo Leopold framed in his book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Information and a short video about past recipients can be found on the Sand County Foundation website at <https://sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program/state/kansas>.

The Leopold Conservation Award honors Kansas farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners who are conservation leaders in the state. This award recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation, inspires other landowners through their example, and helps the general public understand the vital role private landowners can and do play in conservation success. The Leopold Conservation Award recipient receives \$10,000 and a crystal award.

Ranchland Trust of Kansas, the Sand County Foundation, and the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts are accepting applications for the 2020 award. Applications for the award must be postmarked by June 1, 2020.

### **How to apply**

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner or landowners may nominate themselves. Nominators are asked to address five key areas in the application. The key areas include:

- Conservation Ethic
- Resilience
- Leadership and Communication
- Innovation and Adaptability
- Ecological Community

Additionally, three letters of recommendation should be included with the application. The application can be found online at:

<https://sandcountyfoundation.org/uploads/KANSAS-CFN-2020.pdf>



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