

Weekly Article

2-27-2023

Has Spring Sprung?

Hello, my name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator, and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. As the book of February closes the book of March begins, and the question on my mind and many other farmers' minds is, will the mild spring-like weather continue? The signs of spring are all around us, from the morning song from a robin to full blooming daffodils! So, has spring sprung? According to Arron Wilson (research Scientist for Byrd Polar and Climate Research center and OSU Extension), February will close out 5-10°F above average and many parts of the state saw three or more days with daytime highs in the 70s. February was not only a warm month, but it was a drier-than-normal month as well. March looks to enter as a lamb with average temperatures and precipitation around average as well. With all this warm weather, farmers have taken advantage of getting a start on spring field work, manure applications, lime and fertilizer applications, tillage, tile installation, frost seeding, and calving season in full swing. With the spring-like weather come early spring weeds that can cause some major issues on the farm. Just like my ewes that were supposed to lamb in mid-march but decided to go a little early plants don't follow the calendar either! Plant growth is determined on growing degree day, this is when day max temperatures reach the point of growth and minimum temperatures maintain that growth. As growing degree days accumulate day after day plants will begin their growth cycle as normal no matter if it is February, March, or April. Once so many growing degree days have accumulated, the reproduction process will begin. Growing Degree Days is not the only factor that determines growth, plant life cycle is a key driver in when plants will grow, reproduce, go dormant, or die. Early spring is a key time for winter annuals and biannuals to begin growth, many perennials will remain in their dormancy because they are patient and have plenty of time to do their business. For annuals and biannuals the clock is ticking and for any chance, they can get a head start on growth they will do so!

There are many weeds that fall under the class of winter annuals and biannual but some key weeds that can create major issues for both livestock producers and row crop farmers are as follows:

- Poison Hemlock- this biannual is greening up and growing stronger than ever as I type this article. At this point, most green plants are either at the end of year one, at the beginning of year two, or at the beginning of year one. The first year of growth of Poison Hemlock is dedicated to building roots and storing carbohydrates in the low-growing plant structure called a rosette. The plant takes one full year to build up the strength to shoot a 7-8 ft tall plant that can make as

- many as 38,000 seeds in year two of growth. Poison hemlock is a noxious weed that can serve as a health hazard to livestock and humans. Every part of the plant is toxic to man and animals but the most toxic are the roots and seeds. Poisoning from poison hemlock only occurs if ingested but some light hided livestock and humans with sensitive skin can have mild dermatitis from the oil the plant contains. Applications of herbicides such as 2-4-D, glyphosate, dicamba, or crossbow work very well in the fall or early spring (right now) to control this plant.
- Cress leaf groundsel- this winter annual weed is notorious for turning crop fields yellow in early spring, part of the mustard family this plant can grow very fast and make many thousands of seeds. Cress leaf groundsel is also very toxic to livestock no matter if it is grazed fresh or cured as hay or silage. For first-year grass hay seedings getting a good solid stand is the first defense but if it still is present applications of selective herbicides such as 2-4-D mixed with dicamba or triclopyr, are also options. For pastures or hay fields with legumes like alfalfa or pure clover, a very early application of Sencor 75DF or pursuit can be viable but make sure the legumes are still dormant.
 - Creeping or hairy buttercup- this low-growing winter annual weed can give your livestock a sore mouth making animal health and productivity go down. Most livestock avoid consuming buttercup but often consume it accidentally. This plant creates a waxy-colored yellow flower and should be controlled early in the spring. Grazon Next, Chaparrel, or 2-4-D can be effective.
 - Last if the herbicide is your method of control this spring, make sure to read and follow the label (it is the law) many herbicides have grazing or harvest restrictions. As always don't hesitate to reach out to me for help!

Other information:

- March 10th, 6:30-9:00 pm, Bull Buying School located at Raines Farm and Greenhouse 2667 Nichols Ridge Road Seaman Ohio 45679.
- March 9, 2023, Forestry Legacy Program 6:00 pm-8:00 pm at the Nile Township Community Center 12099 State Rt 52 Stout, Ohio 45684 To register call Scioto County Extension at 740-354-7879 or email Brooks Warner at warner.948@osu.edu.
- Horse Clinic will be held at the Seaman Community Center 17806 State Route 247, Seaman, Ohio 45697, 6:00 pm-9:00 pm. Call the office at 937-544-2339 to register or email me at Purdin.19@osu.edu.

Ag Educator Words of encouragement – “Farming is not a battle against nature but rather a partnership with it”. Jeff Koehler