K-STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

October 25, 2024

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

**Brush Control Using Basal Bark Treatments**

While late season drought and the transition to fall has ended some of our late season foliar brush control treatments, it doesn't mean we have to cease brush control operations altogether. There are still options, including basal bark applications.

Basal bark treatment is the application of herbicide to bark at the base of the tree. The herbicide is mixed in an oil-type carrier (diesel, etc…) to enhance penetration of the chemical across the bark to the water/nutrient transporting tissue in the interior of the tree (cambium layer) and the product is liberally applied to the entire circumference of the tree from the ground up to a height of 12 to 18 or more inches. It's an option that often works well from mid-summer to mid-winter when other treatments might be limited due to drought, heat, etc… (avoid treatment when ground is saturated, snow-covered, or frozen), including right now. Two active ingredients – triclopyr and aminopyralid - are used for most basal bark applications and are effective on many woody plant species.

Triclopyr is found in products with the tradenames Remedy Ultra and Pathfinder II or with other active ingredients in combination products. Formulations vary, meaning the oil-based carrier and even control may be slightly different (*always* read and follow label directions).

Aminopyralid is most commonly used on black/common honey locust and is found in Milestone herbicide. It has a different mixing ratio altogether – and some oil bases may *not* be compatible. Adhere to label directions, including conducting a jar test for compatibility.

Basal bark treatments can be a good brush control option, particularly when trying to kill trees standing in an effort to reduce suckers that can result when the main stem is killed using other methods. It needs to be done correctly, however, including application of plenty of product all the way around and up and down the tree. The spray mixture needs to be applied in such a manner to reach the soil line for best results against root collar sprouts.

Basal bark isn't the only option. We'll hit a few more in this space over the next few weeks. If you want a head start, request a copy of the 2024 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide (also available online) from any District Office and check out the multiple available options.

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Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

**Market Now or Later?**

Very likely I'm the only person who goes through the wrestling match in my mind around calf weaning time of market now or retain ownership to a later date, but maybe this applies to others too? Even with historic market trends, planned management systems, economic impacts, etc… there seems to be no "average" year and it's not a bad exercise to wrestle with this topic in every operation from time to time to see what makes sense at that particular point in time.

The October 21, Kansas Weekly Cattle Auction Report indicates 530 lb. steer calves are currently worth just over $1,600/head, 950 lb. yearling steers are worth around $2,200/head and with the fed cattle price near $187/cwt, that means a 1,400 lb. finished steer has a live value of just over $2,700. These are all strong prices and this, coupled with low inventory, point to another fall of record or near record high prices on calves. As calves reach the forty-five plus day wean period, the question becomes, should they be marketed now to capitalize on prices, or is retained ownership right for your operation?

Retained ownership can mean different things to different people, but for most commercial cow-calf operations, retained ownership simply means holding onto weaned calves and growing them into yearlings and/or fed cattle that will be marketed at a later date. If profit potential looks favorable to hold onto calves and add more weight, it makes economic sense to capture more value and profit potential from your calf crop through retained ownership. This is not a cookie cutter approach and will vary operation to operation, so everyone needs to look at all options, do the math and determine what is best for your situation.

Following are some important items to consider:

- What is your level of risk tolerance and are you willing to utilize risk management tools at your disposal, such as LRP and option contracts?
- Can you afford to move a portion of your income into the next calendar year? Will the change in cash flow effect your financial situation in a way the operation can adjust to?
- Are you comfortable managing stocker calves? Do you have the time and labor requirements to check on and treat calves during the high-risk time post-weaning?
- What is your feed supply/availability and equipment to deliver feed? Is daily feeding of a growing ration an option? Can you graze growing cattle on forage through the fall, winter and early spring without affect to your cowherd needs?
- Does your inventory permit you to put together semi-load lots to make the most economic sense on transportation cost to and from feedlots? Can you work with neighbors or feedlots to make larger lot loads?
- Do you have the facilities and equipment to finish cattle? If not, are you comfortable turning over management responsibility of your calves or yearlings to someone else who does? Do you have the capital to meet financial obligations of feedyards while finishing cattle?
- What do you know about the post-weaning genetic potential of your calves? Do you know what their rate of gain, feed conversion potential and feedlot efficiency might be? Is there genetic potential for acceptable yield and quality grades for grid marketing premiums?

This is by no means a comprehensive list, but gives a sampling of some of the questions and considerations that need to be weighed in that decision of market now or later?

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Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

**Can you stop trees from producing acorns?**

This time of year, many people get frustrated with the number of acorns (or other seeds) that their shade trees produce. Sometimes people ask if there is a way to stop trees from producing seeds and avoid the headache.

The short answer is no. There are, in theory, products that can make acorns abort before they enlarge, but the timing is critical and very difficult to achieve with consistency. The efficacy of these products will also vary from one species to another since the fruiting habit differs. These products can be costly, and even if properly applied, do not always work correctly. This means that preventing seeds on your shade trees is not feasible for homeowners.

The best way to avoid the issue is to pay careful attention to the details of plant growth and fruiting habits during the selection phase of landscaping. Choose trees and place them appropriately in the landscape to avoid these issues.

If you do have nuisance seeds from your trees, rest assured, cleaning up all the acorns in the lawn and landscape is not a required task. Squirrels and other animals will usually do the job for you. There are tools available to assist with gathering acorns such as a garden rake and lawn vacuum. For riding mowers, you can get sweeper attachments that will pick up acorns and other yard debris without harming your grass. The approach each gardener takes will vary.

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Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

No news article this week.

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Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

No news article this week.