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Controlling Buckbrush

Many of our northeast Kansas pastures have some level of brush pressure. One of the more common is buckbrush, or coralberry, a perennial shrub native to eastern Kansas. It produces red fruit in the fall and spreads via 'runners'. Like many brush species, Buckbrush is an undesirable species in grazing lands. The dense patches they form tend to shade out desirable species, reducing grazing area. With that in mind, how do we control it?

For non-chemical control, remove top growth after the plants have leafed out (when root carbohydrate levels are low). Prescribed burning is a good option - if done late in the spring for two or three years consecutively. Early to mid-May mowing for two to three consecutive years can reduce stands as well.

K-State Research & Extension Rangeland Management Specialist Dr. Walt Fick's work shows some good effectiveness to herbicide applications, too. Time applications to coincide with the low point of the carbohydrate cycle. This is typically when the leaves are just starting to change from a light to dark green color.

If buckbrush is your only target, 2,4-D at a rate of 1.5 to 2 lbs./acre can be effective. If you are also after other species (musk thistle, etc...), Fick suggests you may also want to consider Chaparral (aminopyralid + metsulfuron) or Grazon P+D (picloram + 2, 4-D). Use caution when applying Chaparral to cool season grass stands (brome/fescue) and always read the label when considering the use of herbicides. For more specific recommendations, check out the 2015 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide, available at your District Office.

17 Year Periodical Cicada

In the summer 1998, periodical cicada females bred and laid eggs. Seventeen years later, we have the after effects!

Seventeen year periodical cicadas are creating quite a 'buzz' right now, and it's one that could continue for a bit! Newly emerging periodical cicadas are hatching now. Their distinctive appearance (black body, blood-red beady eyes and orange-veined clear/translucent

wings), gives them away for sure, but that doesn't mean the first few you see won't throw you! Even if you don't see them, the distinctive high pitched buzzing (the males calling to attract females for mating) tends to alert you to their presence.

In addition to the noise they create, cicadas also produce mud emergence holes in the ground as nymphs emerge as well as lots of 'skins' from which the adult cicadas have emerged. The egg laying activities can also kill tree branch tips, causing the appearance of dead branch tips (the damage is aesthetic only).

Following mating, the female will use her ovipositor to slice into and create cavities in twigs into which she will insert up to 20 eggs. This will be repeated until she deposits up to around 600 eggs in total. Six to 10 weeks later, the newly hatched nymphs drop to the soil and burrow into the ground until emerging again – in 2032!

For a full 'rundown' on the 17 year periodical cicada – including pictures! – Check out the Kansas Insect Newsletter available at: <http://entomology.k-state.edu/doc/Newsletters/2015/KSInsectNewsletter4.pdf>