

Spring seedhead control window opening 3/28/19

The window for spring control of annual bluegrass seedheads is starting to open across Nebraska. Growing degree day (GDD) models are recommended to schedule the first applications each spring. The medium-range climate forecast models suggest at to above-normal air temperatures (Fig 1). That should accelerate GDD accumulation (Fig. 2) for both Proxy/PGR (ethephon) and Embark (mefluidide). *Note: Embark is no longer manufactured for turf use, existing stock can still be used, however.* The easiest way to track GDDs is to use websites like GDDTracker.net to time the first application and GreenKeeper to schedule follow-up applications. For more information about GDD calculations, view this Turf iNfo from 2017: https://turf.unl.edu/turfinfo/9-28_GDD_Calcs.pdf.

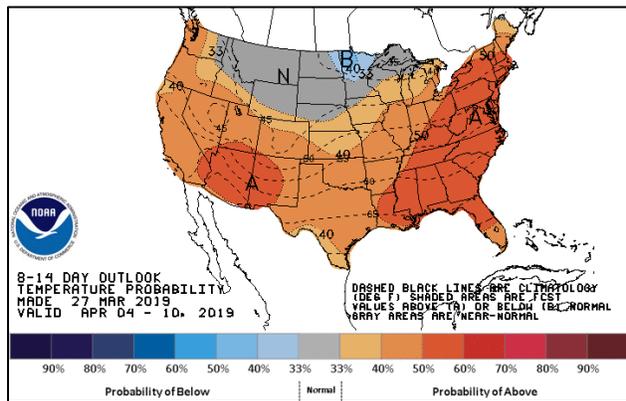


Figure 1. NOAA Climate Prediction Center models suggest temperatures at or above normal from 4/4 to 4/10. From: www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

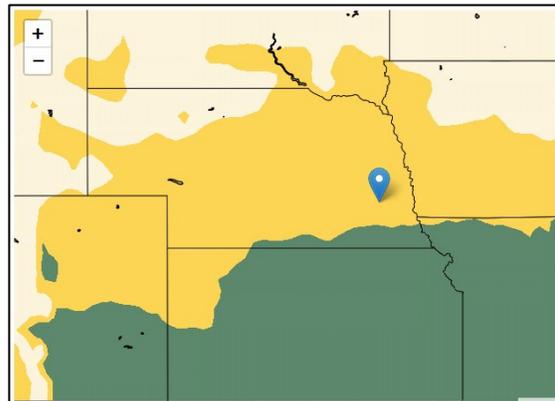


Figure 2. GDDTracker.net shows Nebraska is getting close to the initial Proxy timing. Spring conditions

Tips to control seedheads:

- Make the first application of ethephon (Proxy) when your location is in the green shading of GDDTracker.net. This occurs at **220-500 GDD (base 32F)** since February 15th. For the first application, ethephon can be applied by itself at 5 fl oz/1000 ft².
- One or two follow-up applications are typically needed to gain acceptable control. Those applications should occur **200-250 GDD (base 0C)** after the first application. Note the different temperature scale for the follow up applications. GreenKeeper can track these follow-up ethephon applications for turf managers.
- Class A PGRs add safety to ethephon applications. Historically, trinexapac-ethyl (Primo Maxx) has been used for this application. Our research shows that prohexadione-Ca (Anuew) can also be effective. Other have used colorants to mask any potential phytotoxicity.
- A late fall application of ethephon can dramatically improve seed head control when combined with traditional spring application.
- It's still common to have some seedheads later this spring. These applications usually suppress, but do not completely eliminate seedheads. Remember, there would be many more seedheads without these PGR applications. Use a check plot to confirm your program is working.

Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu