BILL: And welcome into another edition of Ag Talk. This is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Time to get into the weeds today, Ed. And a new one on me Cressleaf Groundsel.

ED: It’s a weed that has become more common in Hancock County in recent years and the counties around us. I’ve seen this named senecio so you might hear people say senecio out there. But it’s got a beautiful yellow flower that we see in waste areas and unfortunately in some pasture lands and croplands that looks like you may have had a crop out there. They generally flower in May to early June. They are a member of what we call the aster family so they are going to have a little ray flower as we call around on the outside that looks like a daisy. And then they are going to have little disc flowers in the center. The problem with this is it can be toxic, it isn’t, it is toxic to livestock. It contains an alkaloid that is called pyrrolizidine. This is harmful for any animal that might graze it. So our crop land you know it’s usually pretty easy to control so we don’t usually have an issue with that cause we get it when we plant the corn and soybeans. However in a wheat field, if I’m going to use that straw for bedding and I got parts of this groundsel still in that, that can cause problems with the livestock if they eat bedding and eat that out of their bedding. It’s even a bigger concern in pastures and hayfields where things that we will generally be feeding the livestock. All parts of the plant are toxic. Usually the highest toxicity is when it is bud to flowering, which is where we are at right now. And the thing about it is we don’t eliminate the toxin by cutting it for hay or cutting it for silage. So it’s a real concern for the livestock producer that they don’t have it in their forage feed out there. Sheep tend to be more tolerant than cattle or horses but that’s all irrelevant you know, if in the end it’s going to kill a certain number of the animals, ok I didn’t lose as many sheep but I still lost some. So it is a problem with that. And the thing of it is though in a pasture scenario the livestock are generally going to avoid the plant. They are going to go for a more desirable plant unless we have a drought and there is limited plants they can eat and then they are going to eat whatever they can. And so pastures you might get away with it but I wouldn’t take the chance and then hay and haylage you really don’t want to harvest them with this weed in it. It’s one of the more toxic plants animals can ingest and react to it. The best time to control it is in the fall so be thinking about this in the fall coming out there with an herbicide and doing things in your pastures and wheat potentially to eliminate in there. But be aware of it and try to keep your livestock away from it at this time.

BILL: Thank you Ed. For Ag Talk this is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Good morning to you.

Ed: Good morning.