

Ag Radio programs for December 23 - 29, 2013

End of the Year

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We're into that time of year when we have a normal week's flow interrupted by those holidays. Other than getting daily chores done, there's not a lot else that seems to be happening. Now I know some of you don't want to mess up a perfectly good holiday, but you know that time around Christmas and New Year's is a good time to start working on wrapping up there year end record keeping. Start by working through depreciation schedules and make sure any new depreciable equipment is accounted for. Go through last year's inventory and start making adjustments. While you still could make some sales before the 31st, it'll be easy enough to take that into account on or after the 1st. Then you'll need to start working on the actual record keeping. Hopefully you don't wait until January to start your year's record keeping, and I mean last year's. But even if you do, start on it now. Get all those records together and work an hour or two a day on it. If you get on a roll, just keep going. You don't have to admit that you like it, but just keep going. What you're trying to do is to get away from the last minute deadline because we all know what kind of pressure builds up when you wait until the last minute. Working on it a couple hours a day over the next couple of weeks will get you a long ways towards being all done and ready to sit down with the accountant or tax preparer to do those taxes. Sure, there's only a few of us that really enjoy number crunching and book work, but it's what we have to do! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Winter Survival of Wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was talking with an older land owner the other day and we got into a discussion of how times have changed. Thirty years ago if a wheat field didn't look like a nice green lawn by the time it went into dormancy we were quite worried about yield potential. Well, the wheat genetics have changed a lot in the past couple of decades and I don't worry nearly as much about getting that solid stand of green. As long as we have a few leaves and a couple of tillers, we are probably in pretty good shape. Winter survival is somewhat predicated by stage of growth of the wheat plant. We need a good root system developed which will do as much for holding the plant in the ground if we have frost heaving weather. We also need to have a plant that was seeded deep enough so that the crown is well protected by soil. Usually if the seed is 1.5 to 2 inches deep, we are in good shape as long as the ground wasn't too cloddy. Fortunately we have a lot more wheat going into notill settings so cloddy fields aren't as much of an issue as they used to be. Ultimately we have two concerns about winter survivability. Did the wheat get a chance to get hardened off and how cold did it get. We've had some good cold hardening weather this fall. As such the wheat is probably about to maximum dormancy and I'm comfortable with that. Even without snow cover, most fields could handle ten below zero with nominal damage. Of course, if it is going to get that cold, I sure heck we have some snow cover to go with it as snow covers a multitude of sins when it comes to a wheat crop! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Marketing Strategies

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I had a call the other day from a producer wanting to know if given the current forward pricing opportunities if it was a good time to do some forward pricing of next year's crop. My immediate response was to ask them if the current forward price levels covered their cost of production and allowed for a decent return to labor and management. There was dead silence on the other end of the phone. In agriculture we have spent a lot of time becoming very good at production. Given a little bit of rain we can produce a lot of grain. Production is fun. It always has been and always will be. But then we get down to the economics side and many producers interest wanes very quickly. After all, economics is record keeping and number crunching. We do that kind of stuff at tax time and it is never fun. But to do an effective job of marketing you first have to have some marketing objectives and hitting the top of the market is simply not a valid marketing objective. You have to know your cost of production so you can figure out what you need to break even. Once you know your break evens, you can figure out what percent profit would be nice and then start to lock in pricing opportunities. Sure, nobody knows exactly what prices are going to be next year or what inputs will run, so you use a 2 or 3 or 4 year average and work from there. But you have got to start someplace and your own records are the logical place to begin. If you need some help with that, then maybe it's time to start thinking about joining the Kansas Farm Management Association. If you're interested, give me a call! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.