

Fertilization ASAP

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Here we are over halfway through February. I think most producers know that as soon as the snow finishes melting off we're going to start to see some new growth on wheat. This year was a classic example of why you should consider fertilizing your wheat and alfalfa and brome grass in November and December instead of waiting until the spring. The commonly held theory was to hold off on fertilizing until it was appropriate to apply herbicides so you could do both with one application, thereby saving a few bucks. And it's also a classic case of penny wise and pound foolish. With the wheat varieties of 50 years ago that held dormant well into late winter, it may have been appropriate, but not anymore. Today's wheat genetics allow the plant to grow later into fall and start growing earlier in the late winter. When it may be appropriate to control weeds with the older generations of herbicides is now way too late to be applying fertilizer. You have to have that fertilizer down and in the ground prior to the wheat going dormant. Too many yield components are being determined by the plant so early that any nutrient deficiency in the fall is going to hurt yield in the spring that can never be made up. And if you aren't fertilizing until after the snow melts, then in a year like this, you're already losing yield potential. If you want to go back to planting Triumph 64 and be happy with a 45 bushel yield then fine, wait until early March to top dress. But last time I checked nobody was planting those wheat varieties. If you haven't topdressed your wheat yet, get on the list to get it done, ASAP! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Time to start planning for pasture burning

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's the week after Valentine's Day and you need to start making some decisions about pasture burning NOW. And the first question is are you or aren't you going to burn. Sure, there's a lot of fuel in many pastures, AND you didn't burn last year, BUT what about soil moisture? One of the pre-requisites is that if you are going to burn in the Flint Hills you want to make sure that you have a full soil moisture profile going into the start of the spring season. Guess what? Even with the heavy snows we've had so far this month, we are still rated as abnormally dry in the drought monitor index. Add to that the very simple fact that since September 1st we are only at about 75% of normal precipitation. As far as I'm concerned, that is not adequate to recommend burning in most pastures. Now, if in the next month we have good precipitation then I would feel comfortable to say burn. The current one and three month outlook show no major trends. After a good growing season in 2013, 2014 could be taking us right back into the same drought pattern we saw in 2011 and 2012. At this point in time here's what I would recommend. Select the pastures that have the highest need of being burned and I would say that those are the ones with cedars, buckbrush or dogwood. Make sure that it's not more than 1/3 of all your pasture acres. Then get fire breaks mowed and burned so that you can burn them, on short notice, if the weather is right, including a little bit more precipitation in the coming weeks. If we don't get the precip, you don't have to burn just because you have fire breaks ready. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

How good are your forage resources

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I saw a very interesting report recently regarding cow herd nutrition. This report stated that the biggest challenge to most cow herds was inadequate nutrition due to forages being of lower nutritional value than expected. Specifically, the forages had much lower protein value than expected due to forages being more mature than anticipated at harvest time. I laughed out loud when I read this, not because I disagreed with the study, but because I've been saying that for 20 years. Plain and simple, too many producers are putting up crap for hay because they are cutting it at a far too late of a stage of maturity hoping for more tons. Tonnage doesn't mean anything if the protein value is low. As protein level in hay drops, TDN, total digestible nutrients, drops because you have more and more of the plant converting to non-digestible components like lignin. It's a simple physiological process. Cellulose and hemicellulose convert to lignin. Every step down this process is a natural process of plant maturation and mature plants are less digestible than immature plants. To produce high quality forages requires you to forego a little bit of yield and harvest earlier than you ever may have thought. Putting up high quality forage will result in you needing to feed less protein and or grain thereby reducing cost of production. And I bring this up now, because if, as I think, we could have another hot and dry year, forage may be tight and we get back into that nasty cycle of harvesting late to increase tons, but then we decrease quality, and performance suffers and here we go again! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.