

### Wheat Harvest Getting Underway

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The earliest report that I received of test cutting in the county was June 18<sup>th</sup>. Yield's that I've been hearing have been okay to surprising and quality has been good. In general we are going to have a much better crop than what we're hearing out of southwest Kansas where dryland yields seem to be running in the 5 to 15 bushel range! How harvest progresses will depend on how the rain storms stack up. Obviously at this point in time, ten days of no rain would be a welcome thing, if for no other reason to protect the test weight. Regardless, here's some of the things we need to be looking out for in the coming weeks as we get wheat harvest done. If you are keeping wheat back for seed, condition becomes very critical. If you have no aeration then you need to have wheat at 12 to 12.5% minimum for storage. Sure we're only keeping it for 3 to 4 months, but you can lose a lot of seed in a hurry if it goes out of condition because of high moisture. Clean and treat the storage area ahead of time, clean the grain going into storage and cleaning it coming out of storage. We are setting up to also have a lot of volunteer wheat before the summer it out. Volunteer wheat is a guaranteed way to have problems in a field, or adjacent fields in the coming crop season. Wait for the seed that went out the back of the combine to start sprouting and then get on it and control it before it gets too big. Sure, you may have to treat a couple of times between now and this fall, but you'll be doing everyone a favor! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Why Was The Brome Crop So Bad?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In all brutal honesty, the brome hay crop this year is... well, they won't let me use those words on radio. For the most part it is being harvested several weeks late, thanks to a bizarre combination of factors. Even so, the quantity has been described by most producers as about half of normal. And what most folks don't realize yet is that the quality is in the gutter. Figure protein is going to be running 6 to 7% or about the equivalent of average prairie hay. The question that most folks are asking is why was the crop so short.

Basically it comes down to two factors, nutrients and water. Most of the region had less than half of normal May rainfall. April had better rain but not great temperature conditions. Let's face it, it was a cold spring. By the time we started getting rain it was too late for the brome crop almost too late for the wheat crop. There's not much we can do about the rain. But the nutrients or fertilizer, we can do something about. We are fertilizing our brome grass hay fields way too late. Most producers want to fertilize in late January or February and then we have a winter like we had and all of a sudden we're fertilizing the end of March. That is way too late. We need to start planning to fertilize from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>. Yes, that's a big departure from normal, but when we fertilize that early we have more opportunity to get the nutrients into the soil where the roots can pick it up, even through the winter and the we'll wind up with better utilization of those nutrients of better yield and quality. Just make your calendar now to fertilize brome this fall! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Start Thinking Prairie Hay harvest

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We've got producers still trying to get brome hay put up. The alfalfa crop timing is all messed up, we've got wheat harvest getting started and now I'm going to really make your day - You need to be gearing up for prairie hay harvest starting right after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July! One of the things that I have tried over the years to get producers to think about is why they put up hay. What is the principle thing that you are trying to accomplish with your hay crop. Is it protein, energy, or purely bulk mass? If all you want is something to fill them up and you don't care of the quality is poor, then certainly, wait until the last possible minute. But do be aware that the lower the quality of the hay, the less of it cattle will eat. If you want to put some weight on some yearlings, or want to maximize milking from beef cows, then you definitely need higher protein hay. And the more protein you can provide from your hay, the less you'll have to buy and feed. Quite honestly, once we hit mid July prairie hay quality goes to heck in a handcart and in a hurry. The quicker you can move on hay meadows after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the better the hay quality will be. Even just a two to three weeks span from early July to the first of August can cause you to lose 2 to 4% points of protein while not gaining all that much in tonnage! And we aren't even talking about the negative impact on the grass plants from haying later in the season. After the past few years, these plants need a change to recover which would be aided by earlier haying. So getting back to my first point, what is your objective with your prairie hay crop? This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.