

Wrap up wheat planting

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We're wrapping up the first week of November and you need to be wrapping up your wheat planting. You CAN plant clear into January and will actually get a crop. But once we move past November 1st, yield potential starts to go downhill fast. I've seen figures anywhere from 1 to 2% per day, but of course, this is all going to vary depending on growing conditions in any one year. If we get to the 15th of November and you still don't have wheat in the ground, there are a lot of reasons to just stop and not go any further with it. There's farm program and crop insurance considerations as well as many agronomic considerations. Between now and then, you should probably be planting 120 pounds of seed per acre, but never more than that. I would want a phosphorus starter fertilizer in the seed row if possible, but be careful not to have more than ten pounds of N plus K per acre in direct seed contact. The seed needs to be treated with a fungicide. Then when you apply your nitrogen fertilizer, I'd consider applying 50 pounds yet before mid December and another 50 pounds in mid February. But perhaps a better idea would be to just not plant much more wheat. Some people are going to hate me for this but if you feel that you can't go back into this field with beans, corn or sorghum, consider an oats crop planted in February. We can get some pretty decent oat crops and have that crop off not that much later than wheat leaving whatever options open that you were wanting to do including double crop beans or rotation into alfalfa in August or wheat later on. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Forage analysis - how much do you need?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'm a big believer in getting forage analysis done after forages are harvested and before feeding. We tend to over feed our cattle anyway but if you are trying to be efficient and happen to hit a cutting of hay that is way below your expected levels, that is the worst case scenario. Some producers feel that cattle will just eat more to compensate, but it is well known that cattle will actually eat less of lower quality forage so the theory actually winds up backfiring. One of the challenges that we face is that there are so many options available when we start inquiring about having a forage test done. Often times we just want a very specific test such as nitrates or prussic acid so we can make sure that the forage is safe to feed. But once we get past that, what else is really of value? A lot of the items that labs will test for are utilized in the dairy industry where they are really pushing those cows, or for feedlots where they want to maximize growth and optimize feed efficiency. But if you are interested in that beef cow herd, what's really necessary? What most nutritionists are going to look at are dry matter, or moisture, crude protein, calcium and phosphorus, and then an estimate or measure of the energy that the forage contains - usually TDN or total digestible nutrients, NEm - net energy for maintenance and NEg - net energy for gain. It is often also helpful to have neutral and acid detergent fiber or NDF and ADF. If you have these basic numbers you or a nutritionist can do a pretty good job of putting a good balanced ration together that will meet those animals need without overfeeding! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Third trimester management

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When it comes to cowherd management we often talk about the second trimester being a time when the weather is usually good and the nutritional needs of the cow are pretty low so we can get by with pretty cheap management as nutritional needs are easily met by almost any available forage. But the third trimester is actually the second most demanding nutritional time for the pregnant cow and especially for that replacement heifer. This is when the majority of the growth of that fetus is going to occur. For spring calving herds it also coincides with colder weather. It's a time when the same diet that would allow that animal to gain 3/4 of a pound a day will cause it to just barely hold it's weight. It's the hardest time of the year to get that cow to gain weight and if you are still trying to grow that replacement heifer, it becomes incredibly important. Also keep in mind that if a cow is just maintaining her body weight in that last trimester, she's actually losing weight as the calf is growing so fast at that time. So, quickly now, tell me when the third trimester starts for your cow herd? If you are aiming to calve around March 1, then you'll start the 3rd trimester later this month. If you are calving out first calf heifers in mid-February, you're already in it! Depending on current body condition score on cows or how much more you need to grow those heifers, you may need to be pushing them on a ration to have an average daily gain of anywhere from 1.5 pounds per day clear up to 4 pounds a day. In some cases, you may not be able to do it. Evaluate your cows and start feeding them! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall wheat pests

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's pretty easy to assume that by November we don't have to worry about any insect pests in our newly emerging wheat crop. Several insects have very good antifreeze and will stay active, at least on warmer days, well into November or December and occasionally will even require treatment. Armyworm and fall armyworm will feed on new wheat in the fall and will continue to feed until temperatures reach the mid to low 20s on a regular basis OR they pupate. The ones that don't pupate likely die as we move through winter. There is a third one though, the army cutworm, that hatches later, grows slower, overwinters as a larvae and can become active during just about any warm spell through the winter. They actively start feeding again in late February or early March and can really be a problem. They seem to be a bigger problem in springs that were preceded by a dry fall so at this point in time we could be set up for a problem next spring. Early feeding by the small larvae are characterized with what we call windowpane feeding on the leaves. The small larvae can not consume entire leaves yet so they just eat the green off the leaf surface. As they get larger all three of these will start to consume entire leaves. If damage becomes noticeable and live larvae are being found in the warmer time of the day, treatment may be needed at 4 to 8 per square foot depending on a lot of factors. If you have areas not greening up next spring, or greening up and then disappearing, give me a call. Don't just assume it's insects and schedule a treatment though - let's be sure before we pay to spray! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What do you want to hear?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'm going to let you in on a little secret. For 8 or 9 months out of the year, writing these daily radio programs is a piece of cake. There are so many things to talk about that it's often a struggle to decide what NOT to talk about. But for the next three to four months it can be a real struggle to get these programs written. I can find myself staring at a computer screen with absolutely nothing going through my mind and a deadline looming! Ya know, I can only talk about leasing issues so many times until both of us are sick and tired of it. I receive weekly information from the different departments at K-State, but this time of year, even those are sort of skimpy. When I run into you out and about the region, our conversations often bring up ideas for radio programs and I will often send myself an email right then so I don't forget. Some of my best programs over the years have come from you asking me about something which leads to an idea for a program. I think sometimes y'all are hesitant to say anything about what you'd like to hear because you may think it's too forward on your behalf or you're afraid that I'll think it's a foolish idea. The thing is, if one of you has a question or a problem, I can almost always be sure that there are others with the same question or problem. So as we head into the weeks ahead, or for that matter, anytime, tell me what you want me to talk about. Some of you occasionally have and you know that I will respond. It's more fun to write about what you want to hear than for me to sit here and stare out of my office window trying to write something! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.