

Hay Waste Will Cost More This Year

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When we feed hay, there is always waste. Even when it is tub ground and put into a bunk, you'll lose some - it may only be a few points, but it will be lost. On the other hand, if you just roll out a big round bale on the ground for the cattle to pick through, you may lose 30% or more. Like everything else, the price of hay is up and even more importantly, while it may not be up THAT much, properly using it in rations can likely reduce the need for more expensive items in your cattle ration. So hay wastage is going to cost more this season, and while we often think of raised hay as low cost, we all know that the equipment used to swath and bale it is pricey. Take time to look at using round bale feeders or other hay saving feeding methods that can greatly reduce the amount of hay wasted and thereby save you dollars this winter! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Shares or Cash Rent? Make a Decision and Stick With It!

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Several years ago, I had landlords talking to me about switching their long standing crop shares leases to cash leases. They were weary of paying some of the high input prices and wanted cash. A few years later commodity prices soared, yields were good and then suddenly those landlords wanted a share of that high value crop again, and some of them switched back to shares. Now, with input prices spiking, I'm sure some of them want to go back to cash leases. I refer to this as rental chasing - they are going after whatever they think will get them the most dollars. Both crop shares and cash leases are effective lease tools. They both have advantages and disadvantages, but they both work! But landlords, and tenants for that matter, need to agree on a format and stick with it. Chasing back and forth between them is crazy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cattle Record Keeping is Important

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm a stickler for record keeping. I'm actually quite fanatical. You can ask my wife - I keep records on everything!!! In your farming/ranching operation it is just imperative that you keep financial records, of course, but production records of all kinds are crucial. We will be into the calving season here way too soon so start thinking about all the records you can and should be keeping on your cow herd.

Keep track of how the cows did before calving - any issues that you had with any of them. Most all of you do a great job of getting those calves tagged and recording date of birth and often birth weight, even an estimate is good. Also keep track of the little things - literally anything that can indicate a good mother versus a not so good mother. You may think you'll remember it all, but at 3:30 in a cold snowy morning, will you? I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Call Before You Dig

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Everyday, for the last few months, I'm seeing crews out there putting all sorts of utility services underground. Right now they're in the alley behind my office putting in fiber optics. Lots and lots of services are going underground. Out on the farm, we do a lot WITH the ground. We set fence posts, bury water lines for waterers or electrical lines for lots of things. We occasionally stick some deep rippers DEEP into the ground. But how many times do we call 811 for location services? We may think we know where everything is, but do we really. I have a retired county agent friend who was setting a new mailbox. His post hole driller nailed a fiber optic line. He never said much about it other than to growl and shake his head. 811 service is free, offers quick service and by using them, you take the risk and liability off of you! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Time to Talk About Your Leases

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've got just a few weeks left in the year, amazingly. For all oral leases and many written leases, March 1 signals the start of a new lease season. If a landlord wants to change tenants or terms of a lease with a tenant, they need to do so at least 30 days prior to March 1, or basically the 29th of January.

Tenants and landlords, it's time to start talking. Even if you think everything is going good, just get together and visit. Cool December mornings are a good time to sit down around the kitchen table with cups of coffee, some Christmas cookies and just chat. Sometimes landlords think the tenant should stop by and sometimes the tenant thinks the landlord should offer an invitation first. Don't play that game - somebody call and initiate the conversation. It isn't difficult and can avoid problems later on - so just talk! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.