Ag Radio Programs for December 6 - 12, 2021

Cash Rental Rates Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Cash rental rates are always a moving target whether it's crop land or pasture. First thing though, mark the evening of January 6th on your calendar for my basics of ag leasing workshop. It'll be at 7 in the evening at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Center - more details later. Every year in the late summer USDA National Ag Statistics Service publishes their results of rental rate surveys. They show, irrigated and non-irrigated crop land as well as pasture. There is one number per county so it's an average of the nastiest hill ground through the best river bottom. We don't have enough irrigated cash leases to report - Clay County is the nearest and it was $124 per acre. Crop land was $69.50 per acre and pastureland was $23.50 per acre. For averages, I think they fairly represent 2021 and what will happen in 2022 is one thing I'll talk about in Jan. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Think Windbreaks for Livestock and Farmsteads

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I try to regularly remind farmers, ranchers and rural residents of the benefit of windbreaks for farmsteads and livestock wintering lots. The thing about windbreaks is that they don't happen overnight. You start one today and in 10 to 20 years you'll start getting the benefit of it. Sure, it's a lot of work in the meantime, keeping them watered the first couple of years, keeping the weeds and grass away from them, but ultimately, it's well worth the effort. You can order seedling trees from the Kansas Forest Service at very reasonable rates and I can come out and help layout and plan the windbreak for you. But I won't help you plant them or water them! We have a good bulletin on planning farm windbreaks and the spring order form from the forest service is in the office. Call me if you are interested and want to talk! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Field Compaction, How it Happens

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the quiet little things that concerns me about our agriculture today is compaction. Soil compaction is just what it sounds like. Ideally a block of soil is 50% solids and 50% air spaces that may also be filled with water. These spaces, in addition to being where air and water travel, are also where roots grow out and down. Compaction simply starts to compress the soil and eliminates those spaces or voids. It happens far less in super muddy fields than in soils that are just modestly moist. In some ways no-till has made it worse and larger equipment is definitely making it worse. Compaction restricts root development and can even make a difference in nutrient uptake. It can become very visible in dry weather, often showing up as differing stages of development and growth. Becoming aware of compaction is the first step. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Soil Compaction, What to do About It

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the questions regarding compaction that we are all struggling with is how to fix it. The problem is that it is not easy to "fix" compaction. Wetting and drying of the soil, freezing and thawing of the soil do not do as much as many people think towards curing the problem. Deep ripping helps, but again, not as much as people may think. To be as effective as possible, soil needs to be fairly dry when we do the mechanical ripping to maximize what effect it has and the way it's shaping up, this fall may be a good time to do some of that. But be aware that deep ripping is going to use a lot of fuel as you punch down through that compacted layer and fracture the soil. A far better approach is to simply trying to keep from making compaction worse through methods to reduce the weight of your equipment's footprint. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Nutrient Removal from Grazing Crop Residue

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've had landlords in the past express concern over letting crop residue on their land be grazed by livestock because of all the nutrients that they feel it takes out of the ground. Sure, with the crop residue being consumed by cattle there will be some loss of nutrients. But keep in mind that some of those nutrients are being recycled and scattered about the grazed residue field in a somewhat uniform manner. It has been estimated by researchers that dry mature cows will remove 1 to 2 pounds of nitrogen per acre grazing crop residue. Residue is low in phosphorus, though, so mineral supplements fed to cattle may very well increase phosphorus levels via the manure. Loss of other nutrients through grazing is minimal as well. Ultimately keep in mind that the wind will likely blow more nutrients off the field than the cattle consume! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.