

### Watch Nutrition on Those Cows

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The first 60 to 90 days post calving are very crucial times for cow herds. That is when the demand on that cow is highest as she is rebuilding herself for re-breeding AND nursing that very hungry young calf. In many cases, a lot of our cows are carrying plenty of conditioning into the calving time so if they lose a body condition score it's probably not going to be a major impact. But we do need to keep a close eye on those cows to make sure we aren't losing an excessive amount of body condition. We have many different protein sources that we can supplement with. In general, probably 1 to 2 pounds of supplement per head per day. But if our hay is really low in quality and those cows are starting to go backwards then it may mean 5 to 6 pounds of supplement per head per day. But for now, the important thing is to keep watching! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Timing of the Prescribed Burn

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are rapidly approaching that time of year when most pasture managers consider burning and with some of the recent rains I'm sure more folks are thinking about burning. Timing of the burn comes down to two basic considerations. First, what are you trying to accomplish. If your goal is to remove last year's growth for improved cattle performance and/or to control primarily cedars, then you can burn at any time and the sooner you burn the quicker the pasture will green up to provide forage. The second important consideration is when are the weather conditions right. If you are near a major highway you don't want to send smoke across the road and when will the wind simply not be too strong or too gusty. Also remember to use the smoke management tool at [ksfire.org](http://ksfire.org). It's a good resource! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For the month of April if you are in one of the 16 Flint Hills counties, and Geary is one of those, Clay and Dickinson are not, then you have a special set of restrictions when it comes to open burning. Prescribed burns in pastures are allowed during April. But any other kind of burning is not permitted. April is not a month to burn that brush pile behind the barn or the trash pile in the ditch. The purpose for this is to try to reduce air quality impairment days especially for the larger metro areas like Kansas City, Wichita and even Lincoln and Omaha in Nebraska. It will also be a good idea to use the smoke modeling tool on the [ksfire.org](http://ksfire.org) website. You can input your county, size of fire and amount of fuel and it will show you if your burn will negatively impact air quality in metro areas. If you have questions about this, give me a call! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Benefits of Burning

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For many residents that move to our area, the idea of burning is strange and foreign to them because fire is too often viewed as an enemy and a bad thing. But fire is a crucial management tool for maintaining active ecosystems of all kinds. Our prairies have evolved for millennia under periodic burning. The grasses are adapted to burning. Fire is the quickest way to control cedar trees and keep a pasture from becoming a cedar forest. Fire also slows and can stop other woody brush encroachment. Without fire there'd have to be a lot more herbicides used with potential negative environmental impacts. Fire also hits the reset button on those pastures. It clears all of previous years growth out of the way, which reduces wildfire hazard, and makes it easier for cattle to graze. So please understand that fire isn't an enemy, it's a tool! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Be Safe When Burning

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While fire is a valuable tool in pasture management, it can also be dangerous. As you plan your prescribed burns, keep safety front and center. Do not send smoke across a highway. Just too much liability there. If your fire extends into the nighttime hours, be careful driving through those just burned pastures. Prairie fire ash, essentially carbon, eats headlights. It eats light like rainfall on new asphalt after dark! Be careful because even a pasture you know well can become confusing. Establish fire breaks which can be done anytime during the off-season by the way and get those backfires going and well established before setting the head fire. Have a plan, make sure all helpers are aware of the plan and then follow the plan. Assume that something will go wrong and be prepared. Fire is a crucial tool but please respect it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.