Ag Radio programs for February 18 - 24, 2013

Happy 150th Birthday KSU

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Kansas State University recently started celebrating its 150th birthday or anniversary - whichever institutions have. K-State is a land grant university. Land grant colleges got started through gifts of land from the federal government to the states, which either gave the states a location to build a college or the opportunity to sell some of the land to raise revenue for a college. Unlike colleges prior to that time, these land grant colleges were to be dedicated to educating the common folk in the ways of agriculture, mechanical and military sciences and other worthwhile pursuits. Prior to that time, colleges were for the wealthy and the clergy. About 25 years later congress passed the Hatch Act which provided funds for agricultural research and then another 25 years after that, the Smith Lever act came along which started the cooperative extension systems across the country. What makes so much of this unique is that these 3 systems still exist as cooperative ventures between federal, state and local government. The three acts have created what we now know as teaching - research and extension. The three of these working together educate our youth, develop new and useful knowledge and then place a cadre of information specialists, county extension agents if you will, in every county to make sure that the information is readily available, usually at no charge, for the citizens of the state to use. Sure, all of this gives me a job, but it gives all of us a future. Happy birthday KSU. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Cowherd Drought Management Plan

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I consider myself a fairly upbeat kind of guy, very optimistic. But then again, there are times when I'm a bit of a pessimist, especially when it comes to making contingency plans. I'm always hoping for the best of the best in growing conditions. But the stark realization is that we have been in a drought and even in spite of some nice rains this month, the one and three month outlooks are warmer and dryer than normal. Which then brings to mind the old adage that failing to plan is planning to fail. So do you have a drought management plan for your cattle herds? Barring abnormally heavy rains between now and July 1, we can expect 50% or less of normal grass growth. Have you already identified when you will start to reduce cowherds, OR how you will feed them if the grass just isn't there? Are you already taking into account starting the season with a 33% reduction in stocking rate? In other words, where you had 3 cow-calf pairs last year, you need to have 2 this year. Tough times call for tough decisions. Any cow that is open should be gone, NOW. Any cow that loses a calf, should be gone. She may have good genetics, but if you don't have the grass or hay to feed her, she's a free loader and you need to get her off the ranch. At what point this summer do you start to cull the cow herd? I'd suggest that the first trigger should be the first half of June. Evaluate grass growth and start reducing numbers at that time. Consider early weaning of calves and moving them off the pasture. Young calves can be weaned successfully. This could be a tough summer so be a tough manager! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

Hi-tech corn production

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Are you a hi-tech corn producer? The past 20 years have seen some pretty radical advances in crop production. Technology advancements, genetic manipulation of our crops - even beyond what I thought possible with a plant breeding background, and the ever growing demand for our crops has pushed crop production to all new levels. Surveys were recently performed on the producers of corn across the United States. The purpose of the survey was to see how much of the technological advancements corn growers were using. Six questions were asked, well, maybe more than six, but the data I have focuses on six questions, about what technology corn growers have adopted. 72% of the respondents indicated that they were using precision ag. This may be nothing more than a light bar for spraying or it could be more. Roughly 3 out of every 4. The follow up question to that was if they were using an auto steering system and this one floored me. 45% said yes - basically, across the US, 1 out of every 2 corn growers used auto steering sometime in their operation. Next came yield monitors and this one did not surprise me - 61% were using yield monitors - I would have though it'd been more than that. What did surprise me was that basically only half of those, 33% of the respondents, actually went ahead and created a yield map. The survey ended up with variable rate technology questions and this is probably where the next step will be. 19% used variable rate technology for fertilizing and 7% for seeding. So, maybe it's time to start thinking about VRT! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.