

Bluestem Pasture Rental Rates

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Well, they snuck this one in on us but in this case, it's a good thing! I'm not sure where they found the funds to do it and I thank whoever did, but we now have a 2013 Bluestem Pasture Rental rates report - the first report since 2009 when it was canceled due to lack of funds. One thing that I need to emphasize is that this census, and it's a census, not a survey, reports averages. Brand new agreements will be higher than these figures as these take in rental rates that may not have changed for 3 or 5 years, or longer. So let's go with some of the numbers. Average reported rate for a cow/calf pair was \$151 per pair for the season. If you are in a new agreement, you may very well be in the 175 to \$200 per pair range. On a per acre basis that cranks out to be about \$21 per acre which I know is well below the going rate, so just go with the per pair range. For partial season contracts, read that as early intensive stocking, for steers or heifers going in at under 700 pounds, it was running about \$75 per head, \$88 per head if they were averaged over 700 pounds at turn in time. While it doesn't specifically say this in the survey, standard practice on double stock is to have the animals out by July 15th. I'm a little concerned that average acres per pair was only 7.7, well under my recommendation of 8.5 acres, especially this year. As for the range of prices being paid across the 14 county bluestem region, cows with spring calves ranged from 60 per pair for the season to as high as 350. Copies at Extension Office. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Controlling Crownvetch

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There is a creeping alien moving into more and more pastures. It's coming out of the road ditches and quietly taking over and smothering more and more desirable grasses and native vegetation. The plant is called crownvetch and it is becoming a real problem. Crownvetch is now a noxious weed in some states, but not yet in Kansas, although I have been lobbying for that for several years. It has long been planted on roadsides for soil stabilization, which it is a good at. And while it is a legume and puts nitrogen into the soil, we are finding it becoming a pest more and more often. It's a perennial, it has pretty pinkish/lavender flowers and once it gets established it will smother anything else trying to grow there. Like most perennial plants it is going to be a multiyear effort to get it under control. Since crownvetch is a broadleaf legume it is going to be impacted by many of our broadleaf herbicides. 2,4-D will cause some damage but you are going to see a lot better result if you tank mix with dicamba or triclopyr. Unfortunately all of these are pretty much going to nuke any broadleaf plants including desirable broad leaf plants. A newer product that I think needs to be considered for control of crownvetch is Milestone. This product is very active on legume plants but will not hurt grasses, naturally, and even many other broadleaf plants. AND since it doesn't have any of those phenoxy herbicides, you don't have to worry about vapor drift. Be sure to mix according to label directions, apply with lots of water and then retreat as needed. Like all legumes, seeds can lay dormant for years. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

Why so much bromegrass?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As I've been talking to producers the past few weeks, everyone is commenting on the incredible yields of bromegrass this year. Yields of 4+ tons per acre have been commonly reported with is well above are more normal bromegrass yields of 2.5 to 3 tons per acre. And everyone is asking why. The answer is quite simple, drought! How much bromegrass did you get last year? Not much which means that a lot of that fertilizer that you applied for the 2012 crop was still in the ground or in the plant. So what you are seeing this year is a little bit this year's fertilizer and a little bit last year's fertilizer. If we continue to get rain you're also going to see better than normal prairie hay production also. Not because of the rain, although you need to have it, but both brome and native also have natural cycling of nitrogen from roots that die and residue on the soil surface. In a drought year that doesn't get used up so it was just sitting there waiting for this year. The part of all of this that I want to harp on is that the unused 2012 crop year nitrogen was actually being utilized last fall and it shows that we should probably be putting on more of our fertilizer in November and December on bromegrass.

Waiting until March to fertilize bromegrass is waiting too late. We need to have that nitrogen on at the end of the fall season so it can be taken up and put in place before winter so that it's ready to go in the spring. Just try it for two years. Apply your normal fertilizer rates but get them down by December 15th, instead of March, and see what a difference it makes in yields the next year!

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