Ag Radio programs for January 13 - 19, 2014

Ag Lease Termination

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Let's continue with our series of discussions on ag leases. One of the commonly misunderstood portions of the Kansas Ag Lease Law is the part concerning termination of a lease agreement. If you have a written agreement with specific ending dates for the lease, then those govern the termination. However, if you have a written lease that doesn't specify termination OR if you have an oral agreement, then Kansas law becomes very specific about termination. To hold up in court and be considered legal termination, notice must be in writing, delivered to the individual at least 30 days prior to March 1st (meaning no later than January 30th) and setting the termination date as March 1. The exception in the law is that if fall seeded crops were planted, essentially wheat, then the lease on those acres terminates the day after the last day of harvest or August 1st whichever comes first. Since lease terminations are rarely good situations, you need to make sure that all of these criteria are met. If you know now that you aren't going to renew a lease with a tenant, get them a letter. Hand delivery is best, mailing it is okay but mail it so you receive confirmation of delivery and then remember it has to be in the tenants hands by January 30th, NOT postmarked January 30th. You can also leave the termination notice at the tenants normal residence with anyone over the age of 12 or simply posted in a conspicuous place. But remember, 30 days prior to March 1 ending March 1! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Cover Crop Termination

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Cover crops aren't being used by everyone yet, but there are enough folks out there that we need to start thinking about how we manage those cover crops, specifically, when do we terminate those cover crops so that we stay in compliance with government farm programs, crop insurance, etc. The USDA finally has come out with guidelines and regulations in a brochure. This brochure was first published last summer and was revised this fall and the new version was just released in December. Naturally NRCS had to develop a map for cover crop management zones. While Kansas ultimately includes all four zones, Geary County and all surrounding counties are considered zone 3. But if you talk with other producers from around the state recognize that their county may well be different. All of this pertains to non-irrigated cropland. And quite simply, any cover crop must be terminated at or before planting of the intended crop. Which immediately caused me to wonder what constituted termination. If I spray it, does it have to be obviously dying from the herbicide? Well, the answer to that is no, the act of spraying is determined to be termination as is rolling it to kill it. So you could spray your cover crop this morning and immediately go in and plant behind the sprayer and be covered. Of course, if the cover crop doesn't die, than that falls under the bad farming practices and that may bring a whole host of other issues. And yes, you could even plant your crop and then spray and still be okay as the guidelines say to terminate AT or before planting. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Soybean Fertilization Plans

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been quite pleased with the number of producers who have been stopping by to pick up soil test bags or bringing soil samples back in. One of the producers and I were looking at his results the other day and we both noticed how much 20 years of no-till had improved the soil organic matter, essentially a 3 to 4 fold increase which can mean a lot to your soil health! With that said, I really don't think we still have enough folks soil testing ahead of soybeans or applying adequate fertility for the kind of bean crops they want to grow. Because soybeans are a legume and we have not traditionally fertilized them with nitrogen, it's easy to develop this mindset that soybeans just don't need fertilizer, period. And that would be a mistake! Obviously we need a soil test to really know what we need and in the absence of a soil test I'm going to recommend applying 20 pounds of phosphorus every year simply because soybeans are going to remove about 3/4 of a pound of phosphorus per bushel produced. So you're going to need at least 20 pounds to equal the amount of phosphorus removed by a 25 bushel yield. Micro nutrients are also a concern and I think some soybean yield disappointment may come down to some micronutrient deficiencies or soil pH problems. Being a legume, soybeans are going to be far more sensitive to acid soils than our grass crops. Once we see pH levels drop below 6, we really need to be thinking about lime, not only for the health of the nitrogen nodules, but for the phosphorus availability as well. So take a soil sample and let's build a fertility plan! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.