

Ag Radio Programs for December 18 - 24, 2017

Ag Leases

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 talking on and off again all fall about ag leases and the need to keep those communications lines open. But there's always a ton of questions about who shares what and what's a fair cash rental rate, and when can I cancel a lease, etc. For the record, the Kansas Ag Lease Law is silent on details of who shares what. I know there used to be a pretty commonly used set of standards of what was shared but that was back in the days when beans and wheat were generally bin run seed, tillage was performed before during and after the crop and six row equipment was big. Today's crop production is very different and it does create a lot of confusion for landlords and for tenants. To be right honest, the things that the Kansas Ag Lease law does address has to do with terminating leases, and what a landlord and tenants rights are in the process. The law sees an ag lease as a contract and the terms of the contract are up to the two parties to resolve. Which means discussion and communication. Leases are best when written out but they do not have to be complex. I can show you some very simple but solid one page leases. Again this year I will be holding a Basics of Ag Leases meeting and encourage landlords and tenants to both attend. It will be Tuesday evening, January 9th, at the 4-H Sr. Citizen's Building starting at 7 p.m. and I hope to be done no later than 8:30. We'll cover the basics of the Kansas Ag Lease law and then also talk about considerations for 2018 farm leases. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Preparing for drought

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I don't consider myself a pessimist, in fact I consider myself a rather optimistic individual, until it comes to the weather. When it comes to the weather I'm a firm believer in being a realist. The realists view is that we've been on the edge of drought for the past two years and have just escaped some really serious issues. Things are pretty dry right now and in particular I'm thinking about pastures and cattle herds. The long range climate prediction center maps aren't showing a lot of pessimism in the precipitation, but they aren't showing optimism either which means that they view it as equal chances for above, average or below through 2018 and into early 2019. Temperature is a different story though. They are showing strong trends through all of next year for above average temperatures. The question that I have today is what are your plans for pastures, cattle herds and water supply if we are going into a drought? At what stage do you start to pull cattle off pasture and reduce stocking rates. Do you cull the cow herd a little harder this year and don't save as many heifers back. If you're buying stockers do you buy like you normally do or do you back off 10 or 20% . Do you have alternate water supplies if the ponds dry up? If you stock light and it's a normal year, then great, you've given the pastures a little chance to rest up. But if you don't do any planning and just go full speed ahead into next year and we do have a drought, you'll be making decisions at all the wrong times! Plan ahead! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Sulfur in wheat

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In recent years we have been seeing more and more occurrences of sulfur deficiency in crops including wheat and corn. Sulfur deficiency is something that we rarely used to worry about. A big reason for this was that we used to get a lot of sulfur deposited with rain and snow thanks to all the atmospheric sulfur from vehicle emissions and coal fired power plants, that is to say, the cause of acid rain! Additionally, back in the days when phosphorus fertilizer was often rock phosphate, we were getting a fair amount of sulfur and many other micronutrients through that source. Keep in mind that we aren't talking huge amounts of sulfur being needed. A 200 bushel corn crop removes 15 pounds of sulfur in the grain. An 80 bushel wheat crop removes 7 pounds in the grain. So we aren't talking about large removal rates here. But with the decline in atmospheric sulfur deposition and nobody truly using rock phosphate anymore AND cooler soils slowing down turnover of sulfur from organic matter breakdown, we are starting to see sulfur deficiency and it's usually in wheat and corn. It'll often show up as yellow spots that almost look like good old soil borne mosaic in wheat fields. We can soil test for sulfur but it requires a profile soil sample. Some people would prefer to just pay for 10 pounds of sulfur annually than to take a 2 foot profile test. What I'd suggest is next spring just look for pale yellowish areas in your wheat and if you can't explain them away, then test. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What's the status of the wheat crop?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The early part of last week I drove from Paris Texas back to Junction City. I got to look at a lot of wheat at 65 mph. I saw fields that were in very good shape and being grazed. I saw fields that had obviously been planted but saw no sign of green in them. And I saw everything in between. So what does this mean for the 2018 wheat crop? We've had some frosty mornings during December including a few mornings down into the mid teens. While this does concern me a little bit, what concerns me even more are the daytime highs into the 50s we've seen and overnight lows not even down to freezing. As close as we are to Christmas we should have highs around 40 and lows around 20. We need cold weather to really get that wheat dormant just in case it does decide to get winter time cold. With the temperatures we've been having, this wheat crop is still growing. When it's growing it's using moisture. And in some cases there just isn't very much moisture in the root zone, limited as it is. Warm winters with lack of moisture will cause excessive winterkill, which in this case won't be freeze damage but dehydration. Naturally, there's not a darn thing we can do about any of this. We had a lot of wheat planted right in the sweet time in mid October. Simply because of less than ideal soil moisture and not much rain to speak of since then. It's up, but not very big. Fortunately, wheat that is barely germinated will still get vernalized and produce a head. All we can do now is wait. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Merry Christmas

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We are late into December and Christmas is just around the corner. This Christmas will be different for me having lost both my Mother and Mother-in-Law since last Christmas. What times like this do though are make you realize how important those memories of Christmases past really are. Or perhaps that's just a function of age or maybe a little bit of both. The real gifts at Christmas time aren't the material possessions that we may receive or give, but those memories that carry on for years. The time we got together out at Uncle Frank's and all the kids were in the living room sleeping in sleeping bags. I can't tell you what presents I got that year, but I remember the drive out to California and staying at my Uncle's house. I remember the last Christmas I spent with my parents at the farm in Nebraska and the first Christmas without my Dad. The presents I received at any of those occasions are long gone or at least I don't remember what they were. But I remember being with family and friends and the food and the laughter. So during the busy days ahead, make sure you take your foot off the accelerator and just slow down and enjoy the time with the family, the kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews. You just need to make sure that you spend time with them because your time, in the bigger scheme of things, will be the best present you can give them as they remember back in the months and years ahead. I don't need a lot this Christmas, my wish list is short. The best gift, I've already received, it is those memories. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.