

## Ag Radio programs for February 25 - March 3, 2013

### Upcoming Programs

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We have several upcoming events that you may want to get on your calendar. The 100<sup>th</sup> annual Cattlemen's Day is this Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Registration at the door will be \$30. This is always a great opportunity to find out the state of beef cattle research, technology and progress so certainly if you haven't been for a couple of years, make a plan to get over there. The event is again at Weber Hall. The doors open at 8 a.m. and the morning presentations start at 10. Lunch is included with the registration. Next

Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, we are having an in depth soybean production meeting at the McDowell Creek Community Center. The program will run from 10 to 2. Registration is \$5 which includes a great BBQ meal but I need to have you call in and let me know you're attending so that we can get an accurate meal count. Call those reservations in to the Extension Office at 785-238-4161.

The past few years, soybeans have become the number 1 crop, in acres, for Geary County and I don't think that this is going to change anytime soon. Once farm programs changed about 20 years ago, soybean production took off. Drought tolerance genetics were incorporated. We've always known that soybeans work well in a rotation, and with the roundup ready technology, they've been a great way to deal with weed problems, but we need to increase our weed management now to avoid glyphosate resistant weeds. Plan to attend this very informative production seminar! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Oats as a forage crop

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A couple of weeks ago I was talking about planting oats, and mentioned that even if you didn't want oats for grain, they make a good forage crop. I want to follow up on that this morning. Recent weather events have given us some pretty good surface soil moisture which indicates that assuming that you can get into a field prior to mid March and get some oats planted, you should be able to get some good stands and a shot at getting some good hay yields, or silage yields if you want to go that route. You could even utilize the oats crop as pasture, probably by late April. Studies over the years at the south central experiment field near Hutchinson have shown that 3 to 5 tons of hay per acre are possible with 4 tons being a good long term average. The other nice thing about oats is that if you are taking off a hay crop, you can probably get that off the field in adequate time that you could still sneak in a late planted soybean crop IF the moisture outlook is positive. For grazing, you need to wait until the plants are well enough established that the cattle won't rip it out by the roots. For hay or silage, you want to harvest at the late milk/early dough stage. Harvested as hay you can expect a TDN in the mid 50% range and about 10% protein. Silage would have a TDN of about 60% and about 9% protein. If the crop does become drought stressed a nitrate test would be in order. The key thing to remember is that you really need to apply the nitrogen to get a good crop. In general, I'd recommend 50 to 75 lbs of N preplant with another 40 to 50 lbs of N topdressed 6 weeks following emergence. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

## Spring Planting of Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Probably the number one challenge to getting a good stand of alfalfa is having adequate moisture at seeding time. Late summer seeding, roughly August 15<sup>th</sup> to September 10<sup>th</sup> is the preferred alfalfa seeding time, but spring seeding can also be effective IF we have the moisture. The preferred planting dates for spring planting are basically after danger of frost is past up through May. In general, I'd like to see spring alfalfa planted about April 20<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>. Alfalfa seeding works great in a no till setting following wheat or row crops. Avoiding tillage allows for a good firm seedbed. With that said, soil pH is very critical and in general if we have a pH below 6.5, we need to apply lime and get it worked in prior to planting. So that gives us about 6 weeks to get fields soil tested and lime applied if needed. The second biggest challenge to seedling alfalfa is weeds. Roundup Ready alfalfa is once again available and makes early season weed free establishment nice and easy. If you aren't using roundup ready alfalfa, be sure to plant into a weed free seedbed and consider applying a preplant herbicide. The other critical factor will be soil phosphorus levels. The soil test that you take to check pH will also give us a good handle on phosphorus levels and let us know if we need to add some. I always recommend applying 15 to 20 pounds of nitrogen to keep the plants going into the nodules can kick in and do their job. As for planting rates, 12 to 16 pounds of pure live seed is recommended in central and eastern Kansas dryland settings. Any other questions, give me a call! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.