

More on cow record keeping

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week I was talking about record keeping for cowherds and mentioned a few things that you should be keeping track of. Well, about 3 days after I recorded that program I received a newsletter that had an awesome table of recommended data collection points for cattle herds, both seedstock and commercial cowherds. Data record keeping starts at birth with calving ease, birth weight and vigor. All important things to track and you need to do that within 24 hours. After you get past those points then you've got it made until you get to weaning and/or yearling time. At this time we need to do weaning weight yearling weight, yearling hip height, and ultrasound composition data. If you have a purebred herd, different breeds have different ages that they want these things collected on so check with them. If you have heifers that you are keeping or selling for breeding stock you should have a reproductive tract score when those heifers reach about 12 months of age. Of course when those heifers have been bred the first time you want a heifer preg check usually at about 16 to 20 months of age. It's probably also a good idea to have what's known as a chute score, that's c - h - u - t - e which is just an evaluation of their disposition when you're working them. And then semi-annually, pre calving and post weaning, check those cow's body weight, body condition score, height and udder. All of these things give you a good evaluation of your herd and the cows in the herd. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Liming No Till Fields

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know it's hard for some people to believe, but even here in the Flint Hills, where we literally farm on limestone, we have fields every year that need to be limed. Interestingly, as we have higher and higher yields and applying more nitrogen as we grow corn, we drop that pH even more. Historically we'd apply the lime and either plow it under or hit it with the offset disk or possibly even a vigorous field cultivator to get that lime mixed into the soil where it could work. Then along came reduced till and then no till, and then what is a serious no tiller to do and stay no till? There has been a lot of work on that over the past 20 years. While we've always said that lime has to be incorporated to do any good, we also know that we can spread lime on alfalfa and bromegrass and affect enough of the top 1/2 to one inch of soil to make a difference. Then we also have to be honest that even in no-till we are often stick fertilizer shanks in the ground and then some of those planters really move a bit of soil around when they go through. So do we have liming options in no till. Well, the answer is yes. We don't apply as much lime in notill settings because we are only going to try to impact that upper 2 to 3 inches. We can get enough root development in that zone to make a difference in phosphorus uptake and other nutrients. In studies where lime was applied on the surface, four years after application the pH one inch below the surface had raised 1.5 pH units. That is significant even two inches down it had raised almost 1 point. So if you need lime and you're no till, it can still be done! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Ag Leases - what's a fair value

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Every year I get more and more calls on what cash leases are going for. Everybody wants to know but nobody wants to tell which makes it really tough on me. Additionally, fields vary, a lot. So there is no way to determine one perfect value. I can give you a range, but it gets tricky sometimes. Part of the problem is that there aren't a lot of survey's done on rental rates. We can track land sales and come up with numbers, but rental rates don't have to be divulged. The National Ag Statistics Service used to do a pasture rental survey, but that was dropped several years ago for budgetary reasons. K-State has been trying to fill the gap with an annual publication that just came out last week and is available in my office or online. Just to show you how complicated this is, the new publication has two figures for cash rental rates of non-irrigated crop land for Geary County for 2012. The Kansas Ag Statistics Service adjusted survey report shows Geary County at \$51 per acre. I'll give you a moment to pick your jaw off the floor. Now, the K-State economists then did a calculated rental value based on average crop mixes for the different areas of Kansas and applied their adjustments for each county. What they came up with for Geary county dryland was \$141 per acre. The equitable rental rate is somewhere in between those two values in my opinion. Do you see the dilemma that we face on cash rental rates. There are so many factors to take into consideration that we just can't have a single value. Your own history with the land and past experiences are probably your best guide! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.