

Ag Radio programs for November 30 - December 6, 2015

How'd your cattle do on grass this year?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Most producers have gotten their cow herds off grass, calves are weaned and maybe already taken to the salebarn. So how did your calves do this year, either your spring calves or your yearlings. If you were a little disappointed in the performance, you are in good company and there's a very good explanation. It rained. There is a funny inverse relationship between yield and quality. As yield goes up, protein often goes down. We see it in grain all the time. We see it in forages also. In harvested forages, you will almost always see a drop in crude protein with an increasing amount of forage. Protein is a nitrogen containing compound. The amount of protein any crop can produce is directly related to the amount of nitrogen available to the crop. If we get lots of rain, the plants will take up the same amount of nitrogen which it can turn into protein as when it is drier. But the plants are spreading that protein over perhaps twice as many pounds of forage. Therefore, the amount of protein per pound of dry forage will be less. We know that we can raise the protein of bromegrass by fertilizing fairly late. For grazing cattle, new grass growth will have higher protein than more mature growth. With all the rain we had in May and June, the grass was growing so much faster than the cattle could eat it, that every mouth full just had less protein. Since the animal is limited in how much forage they can eat, they simple were taking in less protein. So if your cattle didn't do as well, you know why. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Test your forages

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Earlier this week I was talking about why cattle may not have performed as well on pasture this year as they have in recent years. More tons of production has it's downside. The point in all of this is that if you are wintering cattle, of any type, size or age, and making heavy utilization of forages, especially harvested forages, you really need to know what you are feeding. If you are feeding a lot of grass hay that is lower in protein than normal, the body condition of your cows may start to drop as you go through early winter, and that may not be a bad thing. But if you are trying to get some steer to gain a couple pounds a day or you are trying to grow up some bred heifers, not getting the growth you needed could be disastrous. It become very important to test your forages. A basic test will tell you crude protein, digestibility, dry matter and for a couple bucks more, calcium and phosphorus - important for those cows and heifers. If the values come back lower than expected, you can adjust your ration to feed more, or supplement with a pound or two of grain, wheat midds or better quality alfalfa hay. But if you don't know what you've got, you are shooting in the dark. You can borrow forage probes from the Extension Office to sample your bales. Sample each cutting separately and even each field if they were very far apart. Get the samples in to the Extension Office and we'll get them set off to lab for analysis. Results are usually back in a week to ten days. It doesn't matter what kind of hay you have or even if you have silage. Get it tested so you can work your rations to get the best results. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Start making weed control plans now!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As I have said on several occasions in recent months, that comfortable zone that we spent a decade in of basically dealing with weeds with glyphosate is over. Glyphosate still has a very valuable position in control of many weeds, but more will need to be done. So here are some new realities of weed control that we're going to have to learn, or for many folks, re-learn. First is just what I already said - you can no longer depend on straight glyphosate for total weed control. You are going to have to make plans to tank mix it with something. Exactly what you tank mix it with will depend on what crop and what weeds you are dealing with. Secondly, forget about post emerge weed control only, except maybe in wheat. For corn, beans and sorghum you are going to have to use a pre-plant or pre-emerge herbicide and it will probably need to be a combination soil applied residual herbicide. We are seeing some very good results of some very tough weeds with combo pre-emerge products followed with a combo post emerge. Thirdly, when we do apply a post emerge product, we need to be treating when weeds are 2 to 4 inches tall. When glyphosate works, you can effectively kill 3 and 4 foot tall weeds. But if you want good post emerge control of glyphosate resistant pigweeds, we're going to be treating when they are less than 4 inches tall if you want that good control. Same goes for fallow season control in wheat. Finally, you'd better plan on spending more money on weed control. Cheap weed control is gone if you want effective weed control. It's a new world folks, get ready! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.