

Ag Radio Programs for December 11 - 17, 2017

It's dry out there!!!!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Today's program goes out to everyone, not just the ag sector. It's dry out there. It's getting real dry. Maybe not so much the soil moisture, but the vegetation, everything from the soil level up, is getting very dry. With a serious lack of rainfall over the past two months, above normal temperatures, low humidity and occasional gusty strong winds, the entire area is a tinderbox. The terrible calamities that we have seen recently in southern California or even in south central Kansas the past two springs could just as easily happen in the flint hills of Kansas. I don't think a lot of the general public realizes how easily fires can get started this time of year. A vehicle that blows a tire and has a rim running on pavement before it stops can create enough of a spark to start a fire along the roadway. A cigarette tossed out the window can very easily start a fire. And if that happens to be on a day with wind speeds gusting to over 30 mph, you are not going to easily get that fire under control. It just won't happen. If you think it can be controlled, you've never been involved in fighting a fast moving fire. So don't go tossing any smoking material out of a moving vehicle. If you live in the country and burn your trash, do so with great caution and preferably when it's calm and maybe some dew or frost on the ground. If you have any outdoor flame, whether for cooking or recreational, just be very very careful. It's dry out there and we don't need any fire catastrophes this season! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Planning for burning

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Here it is December and I'm already talking about prescribed burning. In many ways it may be too darn early to be thinking about burning. We've got a so-so soil moisture profile out there. We had average grass growth this year so most pastures are going to have enough fuel to burn. But I'd like to get some snow or rain to wet things up a bit. Yesterday I was talking about how dry it has been getting and if we have a winter and early spring as dry as we had last year, it will become very hard to control fires. But with that aside, we need to be spending some time thinking about if we are going to burn and if so, what preparations can we be doing now in case we do get the right conditions to burn. First of all, do you need to burn. If you've been burning annually and you don't have a cedar tree problem, maybe this is a good year not to burn. While yearlings, especially intensive stocked yearlings, will show better gains on burned pastures, we don't see the same effect with cow calf herds. If you do have cedar trees you need to get under control, and we get the right conditions, you can burn those pastures in February or early March and avoid that heavy smoke period in April. Remember, ideally we have a good soil moisture profile, a wet soil surface and good fuel to burn. IF you think you want to burn, take some time in the coming months to mow areas around the pasture so you've got an area to more easily establish the fire break. But remember, always start with, do I need to. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

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. We're about six weeks out from the deadline to terminate oral leases. This action is shrouded in way too much confusion. Kansas statutes are very specific that to terminate an oral lease OR a written lease that doesn't have specific dates in it, three conditions must be met. The notice must be in writing. It must be delivered at least 30 days prior to March 1st and it must set the termination date as March 1st unless there is winter wheat or winter barley planted. The lease on those acres terminates the day after the last day of harvest on those acres. Any notice to terminate that does not meet those criteria is invalid. You don't have to wait until January to terminate that lease. You can do it today, as long as those conditions are met. These same conditions hold for pasture and hay ground as well as crop ground. Inputs that have been applied or work done on the acres since harvest or in preparation for next year need to be reimbursed to the tenant that was terminated. Fertilizer that was applied must be paid for by the landlord. While the statutes regarding pastures don't specifically mention it, work done to improve the pasture or fencing this fall should likely be reimbursed also. If new alfalfa was planted this fall, all the cost must be repaid to the tenant. If it was established in 2016 OR spring of 2017, the landlord doesn't have to pay for anything. The termination date does not apply to starting new leases though. Those don't have to be lined up by March 1st. Just whenever you can do it. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Busting up compaction

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Soil compaction is like blocked arteries. At first you don't notice anything but as time goes on and the situation worsens, all of a sudden you've got a major issue. As crop production has gotten bigger, equipment has gotten bigger. No-till farming has given us a vegetative mat to drive on allowing us to roll in fields that we may have had to stay out of for a couple more days in the past. The deadly silent part of compaction is that the worst compaction has no visible signs on the surface. Many producers think that compaction only happens when it's really muddy and we are leaving nasty ruts. Those conditions cause clods, but far less compaction than when soil is damp, but not wet. When soil is damp and we roll across it with most any equipment, we will compact the soil underneath. Soil compaction is easy to view at certain stages of crop growth. Compaction restricts root growth, sometimes temporarily but often permanently. If you dig up plants and roots are going horizontal, you've got a problem. Compacted soils can cause early season potassium deficiency even though there is plenty of potassium in the soil. Freezing and thawing, wetting and drying cycles help, but are not a quick cure to compaction. Deep ripping can help, but it has to be dry enough to cause fracturing of the soil mass. Ultimately, the best way to deal with compaction is to not let it happen. Larger tires, dual tires, all of these can help, but won't stop compaction. We'll talk more about compaction in coming weeks! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Holiday Travel Tips

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We're about a week from Christmas. The roads are already getting busy. There will be far too many traffic fatalities between now and early January and the real tragedy is that most of those are preventable. The problem with most of us is that nobody ever thinks that an accident will happen to them. Well, it can happen to anyone as I well know. One of our senior citizens could be on their way home from lunch at the senior center and be focused on the semi that just rolled by and there you are in their blind spot and they just pull right out in front of you. Three seconds later you're in the ditch and trying to gather your wits, and that's if you're lucky! I've spent way more time on the road this month than I'd expected and let me tell you, to be blunt, there's a lot of foolish, aggressive drivers out there. A lot of people go on the philosophy that "8 is great, 9 you're mine" and they punch up the speedometer to 7 or 8 or 9 over the speed limit. If you want to drive that fast folks, get a stock car and find a closed track someplace. In the days and weeks ahead, please, please, please, drive more carefully than you normally do. Leave early and drive the speed limit, or even a mile or two below. Look twice or even three times before you pull out. Be prepared just in case we get some winter weather. Drive sober, drive attentive and always wear your seat belt. Always be looking for that escape route just in case somebody does something unexpected. Don't be aggressive behind the wheel and please be safe. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.