

Test Feeds

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Most cow calf herds in the state of Kansas are overfed in the fall and winter. If you don't believe me just go out and look at their body conditions in late winter just ahead of calving. There is an inherent fear in most cattle producers of not feeding their animals enough so they tend to over do it. Besides - when was the last time anybody ran out of feed? Most years we come out of winter with probably as much hay left as they fed all winter long. So we wind up with cows at calving time with plenty of body reserves, shall we say. Can it get excessive? Yes. Many studies have been done showing that cows that are overweight can have the same issues cycling and re-breeding as cows that are underweight. I don't think we see cows quite getting to that point, but I have to wonder if we aren't wasting money. I think hay that a producer bales off their own land is often looked upon as "free" hay. Yet we have good information from Farm Management Association members that cash costs for producing alfalfa hay is \$61/ton. For brome it's \$56 and for prairie hay it's \$37 per ton. That is not free feed! If you don't need it, don't bale it and you can save some dollars. We know how much feed cows need at various stages of life through the year. What we are missing is knowing what our feed contains for nutrients. So to be on the safe side, we feed plenty, just in case. We waste it in how we feed it and we waste it by feeding too much. Take the time to test your various hay crops for nutrients and then just take the time to work with a nutritionist to get those cattle what they need! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Grazing Sorghum Stubble

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Prussic acid in sorghum concerns me. Specifically it concerns me when producers start talking about grazing grain sorghum stubble or a sudan field or a forage sorghum field that was cut and is now regrowing. Sorghum is going to be ready for harvest before too long and with recent rains and lack of a hard killing freeze, we will get new growth shoots coming up. Those new shoots are green and succulent and loaded with prussic acid. Rule of thumb was always with sudangrass that we were going to graze was that you wanted the stuff to be 24 to 30 inches tall. Once it got that big the immediate prussic acid threat was diluted down until we started to get new regrowth. But fall concerns me even more UNTIL we get a hard enough freeze to kill the plant. Light frost may top kill leaves that are green. For 72 hours after that frost, we are in high risk phase #1. It takes somewhere between 3 to 7 days after a frost for all the prussic acid to basically volatilize. Then the forage is safe to turn cattle out on until we start to get new shoots coming up from the main stalk that wasn't killed by the frost. Unlike nitrate poisoning, which gives you enough time to catch it and get the vet out there, prussic acid poisoning has very little margin for fixing. Cyanide works fast and is very quickly fatal. It's a mistake you don't want to make with your cattle. Sorghum residue is not nearly as fragile as corn residue. Graze corn residue first and get the good out of that. Wait on sorghum until later. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Start planning now for pigweed control in 2018

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A year ago about now most crop producers were talking about how much wheat they weren't planting and trying to figure out how many soybeans they could work into their rotation for 2017. I'm sure not all of those acres of soybeans came out quite like we wanted, but what I'm seeing this fall is more wheat being planted and ongoing concern expressed with pigweeds in soybeans and the cost of controlling them, if control measures worked at all. As you work your way through harvest this fall you need to take notice of where you have your worst pigweed problems. Simply because pigweeds are prolific seed producers and where you have pigweeds this fall, you will have a lot of pigweed seeds to sprout and grow from April through August of next year. You need to start looking at your weed control in soybeans to be a two phase approach. Phase 1 is what to do about pigweeds, phase 2 is what to do about everything else. Keep in mind that glyphosate or Liberty is very effective at controlling most other weeds except pigweeds and Liberty will control pigweeds if they are small. I would not count on dicamba controlling pigweeds just because of all the uncertain issues surrounding it right now. There are preplant and pre-emerge products that are working good. You may want to look at using both - one well ahead of planting and another at planting. If you are concerned about lack of rain causing control issues, you can always go back to pre-plant and incorporate. Yes, it'll put died in the wool no-tillers into shock, but it may be what you have to do. If you want to grow soybeans, you have to get serious about weed control. And it isn't going to be cheap or easy! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Everything old is new again

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'm sure that farmers of a century ago are looking down and laughing right now. Cover crops were a standard way of life in those days. They grew clovers for nitrogen. They used them for weed control as well as livestock feed. And here we are, a hundred years or more later going right back over some of those same themes. There have been a lot of things touted for cover crops that probably aren't true, but there's enough knowns and benefits that I think more crop producers need to start thinking about cover crops! To that end, K-State will be having a cover crops field day at Ashland Bottoms Research Farm on Friday, November 3rd. This field day is going to be focusing on many aspects of cover crops including the role that they can play in weed control, soil quality, nutrient management and more. Some of the specific topics include Anita Dille talking about using cover crops for weed suppression, DeAnn Presley talking about improving soil quality with cover crops, Nathan Nelson discussing protecting surface water quality with healthy soils, cover crops and fertilizer management, Ignacio Ciampitti and Doug Shoup talking about soybean yields and cover crops. Kraig Roozeboom will talk about ten years of cover crops in a no-till, wheat, sorghum, soybean rotation and Peter Tomlinson will explain about cover crops and the nitrogen cycle in the rotation. The field day will start at 9 and be done by 1. Registration will be required and they are still working out those details so just call me if you want to attend and I will make sure that you are registered. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall marestail control

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. With all the focus on pigweed control we often overlook some of the other weed issues we still face. Marestail is tricky in that it is not well controlled by glyphosate. It can germinate in either the fall or the spring and we may be seeing a switch to spring germination, especially in areas where a lot of fall treatment with contact only herbicides are used. If you are going to be rotating to corn or sorghum, consider a fall application of atrazine plus 2,4-D or dicamba. The combination will do a good job of controlling marestail and most other broadleaf weeds this fall and you should expect pretty good control of germinating marestail next spring from the atrazine. The atrazine can also provide pretty good control of about any other early germinating broadleaf weeds next spring. You can apply atrazine up to December 31st as long as the ground isn't frozen. If you also have winter annual grasses and or volunteer wheat, especially if they are well established by the time you spray, then even 2 pounds of atrazine per acre isn't going to be effective. However, adding glyphosate to the atrazine, 2,4-D mix will help immensely. Remember though that atrazine does antagonize glyphosate (meaning it doesn't work as well) so make sure that you use the full 3/4 pound per acre equivalent rate of whatever glyphosate product you are using as well as using ammonium sulfate as an adjuvant. Using a combination like this will get you through the winter and in good shape for your preplant treatment. If you are planting soybeans next year, treat this fall with dicamba, 2,4-D, and an ALS-inhibiting herbicide such as Canopy EX or Autumn Super . This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.