

Ag Radio Programs for February 26 - March 4, 2018

Meetings!

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We are up to, and in some cases past, crunch time on several meetings. Pre-registration has passed for the 2018 Farm Bill meeting in Manhattan on Thursday, March 1st. You can still go but it'll be \$30 fee registering at the door. This is being held at Pottorf Hall in Cico Park, Manhattan. Registration starts at 8:30, program at 9, it is over by 2:30 and lunch is included with the registration fee. Mykel Taylor and Art Barnaby will be on the program - both are outstanding Ag Economists here at K-State. The third presenter is an old friend of mine, Bard Lubben - Brad was our area extension ag economist for about ten years before he moved back home to Nebraska. Between the three of these speakers you will have an excellent and thought provoking day as we examine the complexities of the farm bill and what is most likely going to change with the next Farm Bill. Friday March 2nd is the annual Cattleman's Day at Weber Arena at K-State. You can still pre-register by noon on the 1st. Up until then pre-registration is \$20. Or, if you choose to register at the door, the cost will be \$30. Cattleman's Day always has excellent speakers. Lastly, March 14th is our soybean production meeting here in Junction City at the Fairgrounds. We'll start at 4:30 with a session on the required special training if you want to apply dicamba. After dinner we'll have additional speakers addressing other facets of soybean production. Cost is \$5 and we need you to pre-register by calling the Extension Office. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What Drought Does to Plants

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Drought is a natural part of the cycle of life in the Great Plains. It's not a matter of if we will have a drought, but rather when will we have it, how long will it last and how severe will it be. I don't think a lot of people really stop to think about what drought does to plants. They see plants stop growing, sometimes go dormant and brown and that's all the further they think. When drought sets in, perennial plants go into survival mode. They slow down growth, they eliminate flowering or at least seed production, they can go dormant weeks or months earlier than they normally would. Root growth often slows down. In our native grasses, we often feel that 50%, maybe more of the roots die every winter. So once the grasses start to break dormancy the roots are the first thing to start growing, followed weeks later by new shoot initiation in the crown of the plant. But if it's a drought year, if there isn't adequate water, much of the root growth stops as does shoot development. They may put up a few leaves and then just sit there. During extended drought the crown of the grass plant starts to dry out. As grass crowns dry out, they become very sensitive to physical crushing injury. Vehicle traffic, even cattle walking over crowns can bruise them causing further water loss and even death of the plant. I hope this year's dry conditions don't get that severe, but if they do, livestock producers need to have a plan already in place of where they'll move cattle to and how they are going to feed them. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Frost seeding of legumes

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I occasionally field questions on overseeding stands of grass, either native or tame grasses, with legumes, We often talk about using a no-till drill but this winter appears to be giving us the somewhat uncommon opportunity to use a procedure known as frost-seeding. While I'm a firm believer in getting seed down into the soil to get it to grow properly, legumes give us a better change of broadcasting seed and getting it to sprout as the hard little seeds of the forage legumes are easily taken down to the soil surface. Frost seeding works best in fields or pastures that have very little residue on the soil surface either because of grazing, fire or even light tillage. You want the seed that you broadcast to land as much on bare soil as possible. Then, as frosts come and go, the natural action of freezing and thawing soils, tends to take in small seeds like legumes. Literally the soil cracks open slightly, the seed falls into a small crack and then the soil closes back around it with warmer weather or rain and the seed to soil contact occurs and the seed sprouts. This sort of technique is most often used by producers interseeding a grass stand with white, red or even yellow clover. You can also use a no till drill and just drill it in. The drill will likely give you 25 to 50% better germination so if you are broadcasting, you need to increase seeding rates 25 to 50%. We can sometimes get this to work with small seeded grass species like fescue, brome or bluegrass - it doesn't work with native grasses. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

How much water is in that snow?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Moisture falls in many different ways. I think we can sometimes get all of them on the same day in Kansas. Rain is the most common form but we also have snow, sleet, hail and odd combinations including one of my favorites, graupel which is sometimes called soft hail or snow pellets. Anyway, all of these forms of precipitation bring moisture to our soil. Rain is rain and liquid water is how we ultimately measure precipitation. Frozen precipitation comes in many various ways and an inch of snow today may have more or less water than an inch of snow next week. So we always have to melt that frozen precipitation down to get to that uniform standard. Last week we had a couple of sleet and frozen rain events. In a case like that, a quarter inch of sleet pretty well melts down to be a quarter inch of liquid precipitation. But snow is so extremely variable. You can have a very wet snow that is formed at just below freezing. Some of these may only need 6 or 7 inches of snow for an inch of precipitation. Or you can get one of those snowstorms when it's really cold and it may take 15 to 18 inches of snow to generate an inch of precipitation. People often assume that ten inches of snow equals an inch of precipitation, but in most of the normal snow belt, including Kansas, it generally takes 12 to 14 inches of snow for an inch of precipitation. Regardless of how it comes, we've had several dry months in a row and we could certainly use more precipitation in the near future! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Top Dressing Wheat and Brome

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you haven't already topdressed your wheat or brome grass, you're probably thinking about now that you'd wished you had. While we haven't been getting a lot of precipitation, we've had enough in recent weeks that if you'd gotten your topdress nitrogen applied back in December, it would have been carried into the soil by now. I put some topdress fertilizer over my garlic planting back in early December and a couple of weeks ago I saw that the fertilizer prills were pretty well gone meaning we'd had enough moisture to dissolve them and carry them into the soil. Here's what I think we're going to be looking at over the next 2 to 3 weeks. The weather will warm up and the wheat or brome grass is going to jump into growth mode. Basically, as soon as you can roll, and the frozen precipitation is off the soil surface, I'd be getting my fertilizer applied even if it means going back a few weeks later with a herbicide application. As for rates, for brome grass I'd probably go with 50 to 60 pounds of nitrogen along with 25 pounds of phosphorus and 10 pounds of sulfur, assuming you don't have a current soil test. With wheat, if the wheat was planted late and is still coming up and is thin or spotty, I'd probably look at no more than 60 pounds of nitrogen. If you've got a good stand that came up timely I'd be more inclined to push 80 to 90 pounds of nitrogen on it as long as you didn't put on too much last fall. I'd also include 20 pounds of phosphorus and without a soil test maybe ten pounds of sulfur and chloride just to cover all bases. But get that fertilizer on soon! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.