

Core aerating hay meadows?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I enjoy when someone asks me a question that I haven't been asked before. One came in last week about the benefit of core aerating pastures or hay meadows. Hmm. We core aerate lawns all the time but I've never been asked about hay meadows. Off I went on an exploration trek. While K-State hasn't done any research on it, that I could find anyway, I found research from Colorado, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Alabama and Georgia. A lot of this research was in areas with heavier clays and more rain that we have and some was from drier areas. What I found though was a pretty universal result and that was that core aerating pastures or hay meadows simply didn't result in anything. Any apparent improvement ultimately turned out to be a short term response to release nutrients. So, save your money and don't aerate pastures. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Termination date has passed

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The legal date for terminating oral leases or written leases without a termination date has passed. It's important to note that while a landlord can no longer legally terminate a lease for this March 1st they can still serve notice now for March 1, 2020. I'd advise waiting a while yet on that. What isn't dictated by statute though is when a new lease can be entered in to once legal termination is given. You can wait until later in March or April or May - just however it works out. But if that new lease is an oral lease, the termination date is still March 1 of next year. I really like written leases as they can have whatever termination date you want. This is really important, in my opinion, on pasture leases so you can dictate in and out dates. With an oral pasture lease a tenant could keep cattle in until the following March 1st. Not what you want. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Can I still rework a lease?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Even though we are past the oral lease termination deadline, there is nothing to prohibit a landlord or tenant from entering into a new lease agreement. However, and this is important, if the landlord and tenant can't agree to new terms, then the lease continues as it was last year until next March 1st. If you renegotiate new lease terms now, I would put it in writing and have both parties sign so that there's no question that you both agreed to it. You can even change the ending date of the lease to something other than March 1st, IF it is in writing and you both agree to it. You can change from a share's lease to a cash lease or vice versa. The only thing that can't happen after that January 30th termination date is for the landlord to terminate the tenant. Which is why I always encourage settling these things well before January 30th! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cold Weather Impact on Insect Pests

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. There's been a lot of talk about the cold weather we had last week. Invariably, following some colder than normal temperatures, people start asking me if the cold will reduce the insect population next summer. In short, no. Insects that overwinter have many mechanisms to deal with this cold. And keep in mind that it wasn't even that cold around here. A fair number of our insects that are pests never overwinter here. They freeze out and have to blow back in from the south. Those that do overwinter are often in egg capsules and quite immune from this weather. Of they are in cocoons or other pupal stages and also quite resilient. The best we could ask for isn't extreme cold, but extreme variation. When it warms up like it did over the weekend, adult insects in hibernation use up food reserves which is bad for them! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Farm Family Living Expenses

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We had a very good ag lease meeting in Manhattan last week. Dr Mykel Taylor looked at what the latest figures were showing for projected average lease rates as well as value of farmland, and a few graphs of 2017 Kansas farm income. Look for several radio programs next week on those topics. One of the most telling graphs that Dr Taylor showed was that in 2017, naturally the most recent year we have data from, 60% of all Kansas farms failed to generate enough income to cover family living expenses. About half of those actually lost money in 2017 and the other half, made money but less than average family living expenses. The difference is usually made up by one or two of the family members working an off farm job. 2018 is likely to be similar. All of this just points out how tough the ag economy really is right now. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.