

### Planting Dates

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We had quite a bit of corn planted before that week of rain, which may now turn into two weeks at the rate we're going.

Which may raise the question for some folks of how late can we plant corn. In all honesty, once you get past about the 10<sup>th</sup> of May we start to see some big hits on yield. If you absolutely have to plant corn, then try to get it in by the 15<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>, but recognize that you will be taking some hits on yield potential! The next step is going to be soybeans. Fortunately soybeans, and grain sorghum for that matter, have a lot bigger window for planting with far less negative impacts on yield. Honestly I think you can start planting soybeans as soon as you can get in the field and grain sorghum starting about May 20<sup>th</sup>. I know many of you will wait longer, but with the weather this year, I'd roll when I can! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Alfalfa Weevil

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Probably well over half of the acres of alfalfa that were sprayed the first time in April required a second treatment. There are many possible reasons why this happened, but insecticide failure isn't likely the problem. With delayed initiation of growth we also had delayed weevil hatching and growth. But they quickly made up for lost time! With cooler weather last week alfalfa growth AND weevil activity slowed, slightly. But as long as the temperature stays above 48 degrees, the weevil larvae will feed 24/7. While additional damage has been noted, producers have commented that they aren't finding very many larvae. That could be due to cooler weather OR because the larvae are pupating. Check the ground for white silky looking cocoon like structures. If you are finding a lot of these, but not the larvae, there's no need to spray again! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Blister Beetles in Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Blister beetles are an all too regular occurrence in alfalfa, especially in those 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cuttings. Blister beetles in and of themselves don't generally do too much damage to the alfalfa stand. The immature stage of the blister beetle lives in the ground and feeds on grasshopper eggs so is actually beneficial. The problem is that even a few dead blister beetles in a bale can kill a horse. Unfortunately there is no way to effectively remove blister beetles from an alfalfa field. Spraying the field would kill the blister beetles, but they could still wind up in the hay. Swathing through a swarm of blister beetles will crush and kill some of them once again, leaving them in the hay. While there's no way to guarantee beetle free hay, generally the first cutting of alfalfa occurs before blister beetles are very active so is likely the safest. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Why Do You Plant What You Plant

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the questions I like to ask producers is to explain why they plant what they plant. History or tradition? Economics? Because we need this rotation of crops? All are valid reasons that must be considered. Kansas Farm Management Association is out with their annual reports for 2018, well, at least northcentral region is. Looking at nonirrigated crops on net return to labor and management we see that in 2018 Grain Sorghum, Beans and Alfalfa were all on the plus side. Corn, Wheat and Brome were on the negative side. Corn burned up last year so that's no surprise. Wheat prices are low and going lower. I don't think most producers think about their cost to put up brome hay - if they did they may quit harvesting it, at least in drought years. But the key here is that when it's all put together, we need to think about why! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Farm Income Up, Sort Of

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As I mentioned yesterday, KS Farm Management Association North Central released their 2018 summaries last week. For the region as a whole, net farm income for 2018 was up over 2017. But here's the kicker in that before you get too excited - the amount that it was up was really close to the average payment producers received for trade tariff relief. Take that away and 2018 was no better than 2017.

There's a lot of numbers in these summaries and I'll be spending a lot of time digesting those numbers. Interest paid in 2018 was up. Depreciation was down, less new equipment was being bought. Gross crop value per acre was up slightly, amazingly. Crop production costs per acre was down slightly. Like I said, there's a lot of numbers and information to tease out of this report. Copies can be found online or give me a call! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.