

Examine Stocking Rates

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is a good time of year to take a ride through your pastures to look for fences that need to be fixed or musk thistle that need to be controlled. While you are doing that, also look at how the pasture was grazed this year. Cattle are patch grazers and often keep going back to those patches. So there'll be areas grazed heavy and some not at all. But take time to look at how heavily those areas are, or are not, being grazed. What you're doing now is evaluating stocking rate. I've seen pastures that have been uniformly grazed down to less than one inch over the entire area by late August. That is overgrazing to the extreme. To be quite honest, many pastures are somewhere between slightly and moderately overgrazed. Take some time to seriously evaluate your pastures and then we can talk about adjustments that may need to be made. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Controlling Horsetail

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Horsetail, scouring rush or *Equisetum* is an ancient plant that loves dampish areas. It usually looks like a dark green rush shooting straight up but it has nodes or joints that break apart with a snap. It normally isn't a weedy problem but if you farm along a wet area, around a spring or near a creek you may find it growing in very thick mats. While not overly aggressive it can be a problem on field edges. The problem is that it isn't easily controlled. High silica content in the stems and the lack of leaves make it tough to get herbicides through. Strong rates of glyphosate may give some control but will control everything. Regardless of what you use, multiple treatments will be needed! There are several other options available but care must be taken as many of these products aren't for aquatic settings. Contact me for more info. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Pay Attention to Details

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Little things may seem little, but they can make big differences in the bottom line of your farming operation. Quite honestly the difference between an average and above average operation, OR the difference between breaking even or making money can be as simple as 20 pounds of chloride fertilizer on your wheat crop. Or a 10% change up or down in your seeding rate on your soybean crop. Or maybe weaning calves a month early and taking advantage of a stronger market earlier in the fall. It may not seem like much. It may be breaking with tradition. But in the end, no matter what you do, attention to the little details often bring about amazing results. Don't follow the herd. Don't be satisfied with average. Ask questions, be skeptical of outrageous claims and follow up on things that seem like they have a chance. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Don't Let Tradition Hold You Back

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I once had an Extension Veterinarian say that more horses were killed by tradition every year than any other cause. I fully understand what he's saying. In agriculture we are tied to the cycles of nature and we get in the habit of doing certain things at certain times of year because, well, that's what we do. But just as I was talking yesterday about paying attention to details, take time to think about what you do and when, why you do it when you do and are there other options that might make you more money. We've seen a lot of research in the past ten years in agriculture that is starting to reshape our thinking and what we do and when we do it. Maybe it's time to move calving 45 days later. Or maybe change our crop rotation or even look at a different grazing routine that will allow us to do a late summer burn. Explore those options! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Get Working on Those Books!

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm not sure how, but it is December. We have just a couple of weeks left in 2020. Once we hit the new year you know what that means... yeah, getting ready for tax preparation. You certainly can't wrap up the 2020 books until 2021 has started, but you don't have to wait until January to get started on them. Getting the financial books together and ready for the tax preparer is one of those things we all dread. We put it off and invariably when it's finally done, it isn't that bad. But don't wait for the last minute and get into the cramming mind set. Do an hour a day now. If you work on it a little at a time now, when 2021 rolls around and you get that last round of bank statements and bills it won't take long to wrap it all up and then it's done. Amazingly almost painlessly. Break it into little bites to try to make it easier! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.