

Water Test Annually

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have rural water at your rural residence you can just tune out right now. BUT, if you still use your own well, even if it's just for livestock, when was the last time you had the water tested? One of the most important things you can do every single year is test your well water. This is even more important if you have a house you rent out or provide housing to hired help. Water tests aren't that expensive. We have sample kits at the office with prepaid mailers to one of the labs here in the state. By taking an annual test you first of all are making sure that the water is safe to drink for people or livestock. But you can also use those annual tests as a method of tracking if something is changing whether it be nitrate levels or any other quality measure. Important information to have just in case something happens! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Plan For a Successful Calving Season

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Dr. A.J. Tarpoff, KSU beef veterinarian recently shared three tips that he recommends all cow calf producers make use of.

First of all, feed cows at dusk as this tends to have more calves born during daylight hours.

Sounds crazy but trial after trial have shown that it does work! Secondly have some kind of record keeping system - even a simple notebook in your pocket - so you can track which calf goes with which cow and when they were born and anything else. This information is so crucial for making culling decisions. And lastly, keep your tools and equipment in a cooler. Coolers keep cold things cold in the summer, but they can also keep your tools and equipment warm in winter so if you need to assist a cow, you know your equipment won't freeze up before you need it. What a great and simple idea! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Which Nitrogen Source to Use

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We spend way too much time worrying about which nitrogen source to use for wheat topdress. In general, use whatever N source is cheapest per pound of N. In times past, there was some indications that ammonium nitrate may be the preferred source. But the Oklahoma City bombings greatly curtailed our accessibility to that product. Generally we are looking at dry urea or UAN solutions for topdressing. Both are going to work equally well per pound of nitrogen. With that said, if you are in high residue fields there is likely to be some short term advantage to using dry urea as it will usually bounce on down through the residue to the soil surface where a little bit of rain will get it on into the soil. UAN solutions can be temporarily hung up on that residue. It'll get to the roots but it may take a little bit longer! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Timing Wheat Topdress

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The most important factor in getting a good return on topdress nitrogen of wheat is usually timing. For much of our area with well drained medium to fine textured soils, the risk of losing very much winter applied nitrogen is low. The heavy clay soils of southeast Kansas are a different story as are the poorly drained soils anywhere in the state. Anytime from now to greenup is an ideal time to topdress wheat. In many years we are actually at greater risk of not getting enough rain to get the nitrogen into the root zone in a timely fashion as we are to lose nitrogen from earlier applied fertilizer. You want nitrogen applied prior to green up and early season growth. Once that green up starts, you are losing yield if you haven't applied your nitrogen. Bottom line - if you haven't gotten your wheat topdressed, get started soon! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

What is Soil Health

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It seems that the current buzz word in agriculture right now is soil health. Soil health. What the heck is soil health and how do you measure it. Quite honestly the definition depends on who you are talking to and what they are trying to sell. I spent quite a bit of time looking at various definitions and finally found one that I really like that goes like this: Soil health is a state of a soil meeting its range of ecosystem functions as appropriate to its environment. In other words, the health of soil arises from favorable interactions of all soil components that belong together, as in microbiota, plants and animals. You'll be hearing more about soil health in coming years as we try to find more and better ways to measure it and assess it. For the time being though just keep in mind that for a soil to stay productive, it needs to be nurtured. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.