

Cost of Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I routinely hear a landowner say that they are tired of paying all those high prices for alfalfa hay and they want to plant their own alfalfa yet they often haven't even looked at the cash costs of establishing alfalfa assuming that they have the equipment to swath and bale the hay crop. I think it often surprises people when they push the pencil on alfalfa. Looking at 2019 Kansas Farm Management Assoc figures for north central Kansas on non-irrigated alfalfa we find that total cost per ton of the alfalfa crop was \$119. Current prices for average grinding quality alfalfa is about \$110 per ton. Dairy quality is much higher. Granted, variable or cash costs were \$70 a ton but in the long run you need to also take into account depreciation, unpaid labor, interest and land charges. So be sure to push a pencil before buying the seed! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cost of Brome Hay

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We talked yesterday about production cost of alfalfa, but what about brome hay? Using the same data set of 2019 Kansas Farm Management Association members from north central Kansas we find a total per ton expense for brome hay to be \$93, with \$49 coming from variable (or cash costs) and \$44 from things like depreciation, unpaid labor, interest and land charges. That was on roughly 2 tons per acre yield by the way. Interestingly the five year average, 2014 - 2018 yield of brome hay in north central Kansas was 1.6 tons per acre. I really think we can do better on yields with more timely fertilization. Last week, large rounds of brome were going for about \$60 a ton just for comparison. Prairie Hay figures weren't given but yields would be similar to brome minus the fertilizer so take about \$15/ton off of these. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Teff as a Forage Crop

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. There is an ancient cereal grain from east Africa known as Teff. The grain does not contain gluten and has been used for centuries as a food plant. But in recent years livestock producers have been starting to use it as a warm season annual forage crop using it for both hay and grazing. Locally I have seen a few producers trying it as a hay crop and if you can get it planted and up and growing it makes a pretty high quality fine stemmed grass hay. With a little luck and rain you may even get two or three cuttings out of it before frost. The trick with teff is getting it planted, as it is a very fine seed and if you plant it deeper than about 1/8 of an inch it may not make it out of the ground. Once you get it established though it grows relatively fast and is pretty heat tolerant and responds to fertilization. Just another option to consider! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Leaning Corn vs Green Snap

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've had some wind this spring, and some pretty strong winds at that. Which has resulted in a lot of leaning corn. Don't confuse this with green snap. Leaning corn will usually straighten back up and while it may look funny with that gooseneck it usually doesn't impact yield. In fact you can lose 10% of the stand and usually see no negative impact in yield. Green snap happens when rapidly elongating corn stalks are subjected to high winds and is usually going to happen between the V8 growth stage to tassel. Because of rapid growth at that time the lower stalk becomes very brittle and high winds will cause the stalks to break off at the lower nodes. It doesn't happen often and seed companies are doing more screening for this but losses can be significant and of course, at that time of year not much can be done. But we aren't there yet! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Early Summer Sericea Control

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. By the end of June Sericea Lespedeza is starting to become really obvious in pastures and we really have our first good control opportunity. The second will be in August when it starts to bloom. At this time of year herbicide control options need to focus on triclopyr as in Remedy Ultra or triclopyr plus fluroxypyr as in PastureGard HL. Another option, and a good choice if you also have roughleaf dogwood you want to spray is to use picloram plus fluroxypyr or Surmount. Surmount is a restricted use product only available to certified applicators but a very good choice. For broadcast treatment you need to be using 10 to 20 gallons per acre. If you are spot treating then use a high output handgun and thoroughly soak the plants. Use ½ ounce of PastureGard HL per gallon of water or 1.25 ounces of Remedy per gallon. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.