

### Fertilize Cool Season Pastures

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Brome and fescue are greening up rapidly and starting to grow. Those rains a week ago really started cranking things up for sure with brome grass and fescue showing a lot of new green growth! Ideally you have your brome grass pastures, hay meadows and waterways fertilized by now. But even if you don't, try to get it done ASAP. Given that growth has started I'd consider backing off the rates just a little bit and shooting for 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre. I wouldn't stop there however. If you haven't soil tested in a few years let's just assume that both phosphorus and sulfur are low. I would plan on 30 pounds of phosphorus and 10 to 15 pounds of sulfur per acre. Then before next fall let's get those brome stands soil tested and plan to get fertilizer applied in November or December next fall so it's out of the way come spring time! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Early Season Wheat Inspections

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Wheat started really greening up about ten days ago and it's time to start getting out and inspecting things. There is a chance that we could see army cutworm issues showing up in wheat. If you see a lot of birds out in your wheat field pecking at the plants, this can be a good early detection method. Early damage may not be loss of entire leaves but it may be window pane feeding on the leaf surface. If you are seeing quite a bit, call me so I can come out and sample population density and cutworm size to determine if we need to treat. The other thing you are liable to see while in those fields are some early season wheat leaf diseases. These are common, especially given some of the snows and rains we've had. While they can look bad we have found that early season foliar fungicide applications simply can't be justified. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Grazing Wheat?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We don't graze wheat as commonly here as they do in southern Kansas. Which is unfortunate, in my opinion as it offers some good short term gain especially in stocker cattle. But if you do graze wheat and are also planning to harvest the wheat for a grain crop, it becomes crucial that you get the cattle removed before that small wheat head moves up out of the crown of the plant as cattle can graze it off thereby reducing grain yield. This is a stage of growth we now call first hollow stem and it corresponds to a true hollow stem length of about 1.5 cm. As of about two weeks ago, in southern Kansas, they were still a few days away from that. Given the weather and the difference in stage of growth between here and Hutchinson, we are probably entering first hollow stem stage for wheat and time to get the cattle pulled! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Why Don't We Plant Spring Wheat?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Every so often I'm quizzed about growing spring wheat. My answer is always very simple and I just say, don't waste your time. The reason is equally simple - summer. If you look at the spring wheat regions of our country they are in the northern plains where there are mild summers. Heat is the enemy of wheat. Heat kills the wheat plant before it has a chance to mature. We even see that some years with winter wheat. The most likely place that we could grow spring wheat in Kansas is in the northwestern part of the state. But even in Colby, where we'd have the best chance of a decent crop, spring wheat yields, over a multi year test were only half of winter wheat yields. In fact, some years it was more like one quarter the yield. If you want to plant a spring cereal grain, plant oats they can have good yields, but not wheat! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

## Grazing Seasons

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I am often asked what the dates are for the grazing season. Is it April 15<sup>th</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, or May 15<sup>th</sup>. To me, it doesn't really matter. There needs to be enough forage out there to provide the nutritional needs of the cattle. I don't even worry about early stocking rates too much because once the grass starts growing the cattle will be hard pressed to keep up with it. I also don't worry if the cattle stay on pastures late, as in past October 15<sup>th</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup> or even November 15<sup>th</sup>. Grazing at that time won't hurt the grass because it's dormant. What I do worry about is heavy grazing from July 15<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>. That is the time that the grass is putting food reserves back into the roots to help it get through winter. Overgrazing pastures at that time will reduce the vigor of the native prairie. Monitor and be ready to reduce stocking rates if need be. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.