

Down to Crunch Time on the Farm Bill

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are running towards the first deadline for the 2018 Farm Bill so if you haven't been in to the FSA office yet I hope you have an appointment. If you don't sign up your base acres will be automatically enrolled in whatever you enrolled in for the last farm bill BUT you will miss out on 2019 payments if there are any. Right now about the only crop looking like it'll get a payment is wheat and that's for either PLC or ARC-CO and if you have a proven yield for wheat over 32 bushels per acre, PLC appears to be the way to go. But it's important that you get signed up or you'll miss that and I'd hate for you to miss out on anything. Remember, that this sign up is for the 2019 and 2020 crop years only. After this year, signup will be annual and you can flip flop back and forth depending on what the decision tools show! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Way Too Many Pesticide Applications

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Last week I attended our annual agent update of entomology and plant pathology. We were looking at a lot of efficacy studies for both insecticides and fungicides. What seemed to keep popping up was that a lot of the sprays that we apply, outside of herbicide applications, are often not needed. We often worry about the wrong things and waste money. Or we could have justified an application, but we missed the timing so it either didn't do any good or the damage had already occurred. I'm thinking late season fungicides in corn and fungicides and insecticides in soybeans. Every time we make a pesticide application that isn't warranted we do two things. First of all we waste money, but even more important, we become one step closer to seeing pesticide resistance. Lets do a better job of scouting and less spraying! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cultivar Specific Management

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Is every field that you farm exactly the same? Do you plant the same hybrid or variety in each field? Why not? I think we tend to do too much generic crop management from herbicides to planting rates to fertilization plans. We need to tighten up that crop management. Let's better target our herbicides to the weeds that we know we have in that field. Let's adjust seeding rates based on the inherent yield potential in that field and do the same with fertilization. We know which fields and even which parts of fields are more productive. Why not push those areas harder. We know which wheat varieties stand better so give them more nitrogen. I fear that we leave a lot of yield in the fields every year because we don't manage to take advantage of the horsepower potential with the newer genetics. It's there, so let's use it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Firescaping

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I came across a new word last week that describes something many people have already been doing. The phrase is firescaping and it essentially means protecting your home and/or your outbuildings from wildfire. Let's face it - we live in a prairie state and we've seen in recent years that under the right conditions we can have devastating uncontrollable wildfires that can burn hundreds of square miles very quickly. This isn't just a phenomenon of the arid west where there's evergreen forests, it can happen here. There are many things that homeowners can do to protect their structures, their home and their property from wildfires. We have a great bulletin from the Kansas Forest Service called Protecting Your Home from Wildfire that's free at the office, pick up a copy and check it out! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Burning Bromegrass

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Rural landowners are quite familiar with burning native grass but the question routinely comes up as to whether bromegrass can be burned as in ditches, hay meadows or even waterways. The answer is yes it can. You want to burn it when it's breaking dormancy which is essentially in late February through most of March. I know that there are concerns about erosion control in grass waterways but most of that erosion control will come from the roots, not the above ground growth. But still, make sure that the new growth is getting started before burning. Even if there is a fair amount of growth you can still go ahead and burn it - it'll burn slower and be a little smokier but it won't hurt the stand. Once the burn is over that soil will start to warmup fast and you'll see a jump in growth. If you just fertilized, wait until after a rain to burn. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.