

Ag Radio Programs for September 28 - October 4, 2020

Keep That Notepad Handy

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm old school, I still use notepads. Sure, I'll also use the notes app on my phone, but I really prefer notepads. In the weeks ahead, as you are running combines through crop fields I hope that you keep a notepad or your phone handy and keep track of what you are seeing from the seat of the combine. Make notes of where you are seeing low yields on the monitor and anything that might correlate to that. It might be weeds, it may be less thrifty looking plants, just anything. Then we can set out after harvest to figure what's going on there. Yes, I know you think that you can remember what you see, but by the end of harvest you'll have watched a whole lot of acres go through that combine header and things will start to run together. It doesn't matter if it's a voice memo on your phone, a note on a notepad or whatever, just keep track somewhere! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Timing The Last Cutting of Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Timing that last cutting of alfalfa is always a challenge. We generally feel it's going to take 4 to 6 weeks after cutting for alfalfa to get fully regrown and carbohydrate reserves in the roots restored. Ideally, we'd cut that alfalfa the last time the day before we have a killing freeze. You'd get the best quality alfalfa and the plants wouldn't use in root reserves starting regrowth. But we never know when that's going to be so we have to kind of guess. We know that the average first frost is October 19th but the cold weather that's going to really put alfalfa dormant is around the first of November. Which means that we are about to that point that if you haven't taken another cutting off your field, I would seriously consider waiting now. The worst thing that could happen is to cut the field and only get two weeks of regrowth! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Sample Those Hay Bales

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I don't know how many times over the years that someone has pulled a hay sample out of a windrow in one place and sent in a sample for testing only to get a bizarre reading. Going back to the bales later with a probe and getting a composite sample from several locations has returned test results far more in line with what was expected. I'm a firm believer in testing every cutting of hay simply because otherwise your trying to formulate rations with no true idea of what you have. We have several bale probes available to loan out just for this reason. How many bales to sample depends on how many are in the field and cutting. If there's less than ten bales, pull a sample from all, after that we can start looking at percentages and figure out something that doesn't take all day. But we really need a good representative sample! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Evaluate Pasture Conditions Now

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Cattle are starting to come off pastures and will continue to do so for the next month. This is a great time to get right back out into those pastures and do a hard and fast evaluation. There's an old axiom when it comes to pasture management that you take half and leave half. Now, when it comes to bluestem pastures, the half that's left should be a mix of those desirable warm season grasses and high quality forbs. If what you are seeing left is mainly shrub, weeds and a few forbs and not really enough grass to carry a good hot fire, then we need to have a serious talk about stocking rates. I see some pastures this time of year that look really good. And I see some that look really scary and make we wonder what those cattle had been eating. I ask a lot of folks what their stocking rate is, and it hasn't changed in 50 years, but the cattle have. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Pasture Lease Communications

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As those cattle are headed out of the pastures it's time to sit down and talk with the pasture owner if it is a leased pasture. Tell the owners about how the year was. Let them know about the condition of the pasture as well as the condition of the fences, gates and any other amenities. Assume that you will rent it again and tell them what repairs need to be made, weeds that need to be treated and brush you want to remove. Discuss stocking rates and adjustments that may need to be made. Talk about plans to burn the pasture or not burn the pasture. And when it comes time to settle up for this year start talking about lease rates for next year. If you are getting a deal that you know is too good to be right, talk about the fact that it may need to be increased. Good lease agreements are based on honesty, trust and communications! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.