

Grass Tetany Prevention

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With spring almost here wheat pasture, cool season grass pastures and sometimes on lush early native pasture, one of the things we have to look out for is a metabolic disorder known as grass tetany which is characterized by low blood magnesium. Cows that are nursing heavily are at an elevated risk of this problem. In extreme cases it can result in death although this is rare. Management of the cattle through not putting them on these forages until it is at least 6 inches tall can help as can feeding legume hay as you are putting them on pasture. Most producers simply make sure that they have a magnesium mineral supplement available. Magnesium is not stored in the body so you need to make sure that cattle are accessing the supplement on a daily basis. Look for High Mag designations on what you feed! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Do I Need to Plow After Liming?

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was visiting with a producer who had a lot of fields to lime this year. We were talking about if he had to plow the lime in or could he disk or field cultivate instead. Well, the lime does need to be incorporated with the soil somehow because it must physically interact with the soil particles to neutralize the acidity. In years gone by we always plowed it in and the rates we recommend generally assumed this. But you don't have to. In fact, you can get by on about half the rate if you are only going to disk or field cultivate 3 to 4 inches deep after application. In fact, in many cases just liming those top few inches can provide all the benefit we need. There may still be cases when we need to apply larger amounts and plow, but it's more important that we get some lime applied and then disc or chisel to protect the residue! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Be Ready to Move Cattle Off Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have cattle on wheat pasture still and you don't intend to graze the wheat out but harvest it for grain, then you need to be ready to move cattle off the wheat as soon as it reaches first hollow stem or what we used to call jointing. Specifically, it is when you can find that newly developing stem and there is about a half inch of hollow stem below the tiny head. At this time the heads are starting to move up into what we'll call for lack of a better term, the graze off zone. Once this starts the wheat plant is going to develop rapidly and it's important to remove the cattle so as not to impact potential yield. Continuing to graze following first hollow stem can reduce yield 1 to 5% per day depending on what the weather is like for regrowth. Under hot and dry conditions that means you can lose half your yield in less than 2 weeks! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Bull Breeding Soundness Exams

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm pretty sure that a month ago when it was bitterly cold more than one of us used the phrase, cold enough to freeze and just add any body part you choose. But for cattle producers there may be more truth in this than we want to know and it points out why it will be extra important in the next few weeks to have breeding soundness exams done on all your bulls before you turn them out with the cows. Frostbite can cause temporary or permanent damage depending on how severe it was. There's been some amazing studies done in years gone by detailing the damage done to bulls in cold weather. Check with your veterinarian to schedule a soundness exam on your bulls well in advance to allow time to bring in replacements if necessary. Because you don't really want to get to next fall with a bunch of open cows! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

It's Spring, Almost

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Spring arrives on Saturday, officially at 3:28 in the morning. Don't expect things to change dramatically all at once. The temperatures will continue to bounce all over the place, we could possibly still have late snows and freezes, or it could turn off warm and dry. Hey, it's Kansas and anything is possible. But spring will march on in at it's own good speed. As the hours of day light are now greater than the hours of night time plants and animals will start acting differently. We may be heading along at a more normal development pace but don't be caught off guard. For example, we are well ahead of accumulated growing degree days for alfalfa weevil development. I'd be surprised if we have eggs hatching yet, but stay tuned. It was a short but intense bit of winter weather but spring is almost here and the flood gates will open! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.