

Evaluate Pasture Condition

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Cattle will be coming off pastures soon 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 shrubs, 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 sure 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.

Fall Grazing of Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Unless you had wheat planted the end of August, just in time for those pre Labor Day weekend rains, you likely don't have any or much wheat out of the ground yet. But hopefully it'll be coming up soon, if the fall armyworms don't get to it first! Grazing of wheat in the late fall can be a great way to put some pounds on recently weaned calves pretty cheaply, assuming the field is fenced or you can get an electric fence put up pretty easily. The trick to grazing wheat in the fall is to get it big enough and well enough rooted that it won't easily pull out. Under normal fall growing conditions that often equates to be about 6 weeks after it emerges. The past couple of falls have not been normal due to dry conditions. The easiest way to check for adequate growth is to go out, grab a handful of wheat and try to pull it out of the ground. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Evaluate Cow's Body Condition

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have a spring calving cow herd, the next month or two can be an easy time to get some extra weight and body condition on to cows that are a little bit thin. As you wean those calves off spend time evaluating body condition score. Any cows that are body condition score 3s and 4s should be sorted off and given a little extra alfalfa hay and 2 to 3 pounds of grain or 20% protein supplement to flesh those cows out a bit. The closer we get to calving the more protein and energy it's going to take to put that weight on. Getting those cows up to a body condition score of 5 now will result in a cow that can provide more milk and will also rebreed better when that time comes. If you're also using crop residues remember that sometimes phosphorus and Vitamin A can be limiting so keep the mineral out there for them! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Cull Cow Management

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You probably know even before weaning, many of the cows you're going to cull. If not, figure that out soon! The four Os still work well meaning look for cows that are old, ornery, odd and obstinate. Once you know which cows you're going to cull, get them grouped up. If the markets are good get them to market. If the markets are a little soft yet, consider putting some pounds on those cows. Right now maintenance costs are going to be pretty low so it doesn't take much feed to put some weight on those cows and extra pounds may yield better returns 45 or 60 days from now.

Consider utilizing crop residues, or a little grain to add a pound or two per day. You can easily add 50 to 100 pounds of gain before you take those cull cows to market and that extra weight can translate to profit at a reasonable cost! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.