

Be Leery of Alternative Lime Products

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When we have acid soils, we apply lime to neutralize it. Lime interacts with the excess hydrogen ions, well, that's way too much chemistry for this morning but think of lime as antacids for the soil! We live in a part of the country where limestone is fairly abundant which keeps the cost down. Many times over the years though, products will come along as alternative ag lime products. Bottom line is that they are usually overpriced and overhyped. When we do a soil test and it's acid, more calculations are done to determine pounds of effective calcium carbonate we need to apply. If the soil test is calling for 4,000 pounds ECC per acre, your need 4,000 pounds. A few gallons of some alternative product isn't going to cut it. You have to get down to brass tacks and find out what the ECC of the product is and use accordingly! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Preparing Cow Herds for Drought

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Humans are prone to doing things like we've always done it. There is comfort in knowing that we have always but 18 cow calf pairs in the Smith pasture and 61 pair in the home pasture. And many years, most years, those traditional stocking rates work. But this is shaping up as a drought year, at least for the time being. Which means NOW is the time to start making alternative plans. Start looking at what some alternative forages might be available. Think about being more aggressive with culling cows that are open, or historically producing less efficient calves. Maybe you early wean the calves and move them to a dry lot or separate pasture. Once calves are weaned, the cows will need 20 to 30% less feed per day. There are all sorts of options to consider, but it'll mean stepping outside the business as usual box. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Early Season Insect Problems

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We're not quite to March yet, that's next week, but it's a good time to start thinking about early season crop pest issues. In spite of warmer than average temperatures we've still had enough cold weather to keep the wheat and alfalfa dormant, but it won't be long before both will be breaking dormancy. Once they start growing and any day we have temperatures above 55 degrees army cutworms can be active. We see a few every year but most years they aren't a problem, but we still need to be on the lookout for areas in fields that aren't greening up or seem to be going backwards. Army cutworms are not the fall armyworms we had last year. Those die out and have to blow back in from Texas every year. Army cutworms overwinter as a caterpillar and any time it warms up, they get active. And sometime soon, we'll have alfalfa weevils too! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Herbicides on Dormant Alfalfa

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For non roundup ready alfalfa, the dormant season is a great time to control weeds. We basically have two different types of weeds in alfalfa. We have winter annual weeds - those that are out there right now and include cheat, henbit and the mustards and the summer annuals, foxtail, crabgrass and pigweed. During the dormant season we have several treatment options and several can even carry into the spring far enough to offer protection from some of the summer annuals. For the broadest spectrum control of grasses and broadleaf weeds, winter and summer, I would strongly consider metribuzin, sinbar, and then Velpar (or Velossa), Velper AlfaMax and Velper AlfMax Gold. All of these will give good control of cheat, excellent control of the mustards and good to excellent control of the summer annuals. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Summer Annual Forage Test Results

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Summer annual forages is a great way to describe, forage sorghum, sorghum sudangrass crosses and millet. The summer annual forages are a very important ration component for many cattle operations. Amazingly we are still able to do variety testing for these forages. The yield results are available on line and once the quality measurements are finished there should be a publication out. Producers often ask if there is that much of a difference in yield and the answer is, yes. These tests are conducted at Scandia, Garden City and Hays. I tend to look at the closest station which is Scandia. In last year's trials for hay yield, excluding the millets, the yields ranged from 4400 lbs of dry matter per acre up to almost 16,000 pounds. That's over a 3 fold increase! So yes, it does matter. If you want copies of the information, let me know. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

