

Alfalfa Update

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was looking at quite a bit of alfalfa last week and needless to say, it was all over the board. First cutting alfalfa got hit hard by weevil and in some cases cowpea aphids. Re-infestation by weevils has started in some of these fields. Then there's the issue of dry weather and let's not forget the July like weather last week. Which is what brought me out to the alfalfa fields in the first place. Some fields had enough weevil larvae to justify spraying. But then we need to think about first cutting and waiting periods. I was in some fields that had buds that are probably blooming by now and other fields where new shoots were starting up from the crown. Bottom line is that I'm suggesting not spraying again for weevil and just start swathing. I fear that there won't be much more growth coming on so let's just get what we can now! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Net Farm Income Up in 2021

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Farm Management Summary meetings were held across the area recently and I excitedly got my hands on the summary book and all the wonderful facts and figures there in which means that you'll be hearing about it for the next several weeks - I apologize for that now!. For the fourth year in a row, net farm income for the north central region was up and up significantly. I don't expect it to be up for 2022. Money will still be made, just not like last year. Average net farm income for farm management farms in 2021 was \$270,000. This is a far cry from the \$12,420 average net farm income in 2015! That figure is total income minus all expenses including interest and depreciation. What isn't taken out of that is an average of \$87,000 in unpaid operator labor. But still, 2021 was a very good year! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Most Profitable Crops in 2021

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Everybody has their favorite crops to grow. Most times these favorite crops are based on perceived profitability. While going through the Farm Management Summary book I came across an interesting and simple little chart that showed profitability, in the terms of net return to labor and management, for crops grown in north central Kansas in 2021. All crops made money in 2021, even wheat and bromegrass. Bromegrass was just barely in the black, but wheat made nearly \$70 per acre. Now that we know what the bottom two were in terms of profitability, what were the top two? In nearly a dead tie for top we had corn and.....grain sorghum. Soybeans actually came in at number 4 AFTER alfalfa. While corn and sorghum were around \$190 per acre and alfalfa at about \$160, poor soybeans were only at \$135. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

How To Save Crop Production Dollars

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is going to be the year that every crop producer will be looking for any way under the sun to save a few dollars per acre. One thing to NOT do is cut fertility. Applying less than ideal fertilizer rates can actually raise your per bushel cost of production. However, one way to save dollars is to not waste money on un-needed insecticide and fungicide applications. I see it every year. Regardless of disease or insect pressure, producers fly on insecticides or fungicides JUST IN CASE. I know the rationale that's being used here. New crop wheat is \$11/bushel. New crop beans are nearly \$14/bushel. At those prices it doesn't take much increase in yield to pay for a treatment. As of late last week there was no rust to be found in Kansas - disease pressure is non-existent. Pay attention to treatment thresholds and save your money! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Family Living Expenses

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the things that the Farm Management Association tracks each year is farm family living expenses. In recent years, family living expenses declined until about 2017, likely due to the extreme drop in farm income in 2015 and 2016. But it started creeping back up since then right along with net farm income. In 2021 the average was right at \$100,000. Couples only were less than that, and families with children were more than that. What I can tell you right now is that it will be up even more in 2022 due to the current state of inflation and especially purchased food and auto expense, but really just about everything. The breakdown of these family living expenses is quite detailed and quite eye-opening. If you'd like to see the entire analysis give me a call or send me an email and I will happily provide it to you! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.