

To: Local Newspapers

From: Keith P. VanSike

Agronomy, Natural Resources, Entomology Agent

Twin Creeks Extension District

## **Last Cutting of Alfalfa**

Alfalfa will quit growing after the first hard freeze in Kansas which occurs, on average, around the first or second week of October, but can be as early as October 1 or late as November 1. The timing of the last two cuttings impacts the winter survival and productivity of the stand in the following year.

The last cutting, prior to fall dormancy, should be made based on expected crown regrowth rather than one-tenth bloom because of the decreasing photoperiod. The last cutting should be made so there will be 8 to 12 inches of foliage, or 4 to 6 weeks of growth time, before the first killing frost. This should allow adequate time for replenishment of root reserves. Which means the second to final cutting should occur around the first part of September.

At this stage of the growing season, alfalfa plants need to store enough carbohydrates to survive the winter. If root reserves are not replenished adequately before the first killing freeze in the fall, the stand is more susceptible to winter damage than it would be normally. That could result in slower greenup and early growth next spring, and in some cases stand loss due to winter kill.

The final cutting should occur right after the first killing freeze, before too many of the leaves have dropped. Producers should be prepared to enter the fields as soon as soil moisture conditions allow. After a killing freeze, the remaining forage (if any) can be hayed safely. However, the producer should act quickly because the leaves will soon drop off.

## **Wheat Info**

Information related to Wheat Varieties, Performance tests, disease & insect evaluations, sources of seed and newer varieties are available. Go to [ksre.ksu.edu](http://ksre.ksu.edu) and search the many topics related to Wheat. K-State agronomy newsletter is called the "e-update". Other topics to research are Kansas Wheat Seed Book Report 1158, K-State Wheat Variety Disease & Insect Ratings 2020 MF991 or contact your local extension office of the Twin Creeks Extension District.

Norton County- 785-877-5755

Sheridan County- 785-675-3268

Decatur County- 785-475-8121

Graham County- 785-421-3411