

To: Local News  
From Keith VanSike  
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Week of March 22nd

This year our “Crop Talk” series was held virtually. This series is focused on agronomic topics targeted for northwest and north central Kansas. Topics ranged from soil fertility, weed management, insect management, and dryland corn dynamics. The topics this past season included: Soil Fertility Questions, Weed Management and that Pesky Palmer Amaranth, Grain Sorghum Weed Control: Start Clean, Stay Clean, Sorghum Insects: Aphids, Headworms and Chinch Bugs, Alfalfa Management and Weevil Update and Dryland Corn Dynamics. The videos and speaker handouts can be found on the K-State Northwest Area extension office events page at: [http://www.northwest.k-state.edu/events/crop-talk-series/index.html#Recordings and Handouts](http://www.northwest.k-state.edu/events/crop-talk-series/index.html#Recordings%20and%20Handouts) The videos are also available on the K-State Agronomy YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxjm2bm1jH8&list=PLZuS-gs49LuzJrBclgolPjgzejublw5x2> Please contact any local KSRE extension office in north central or northwest Kansas for any questions.

### **Spring Oats for Forage Production**

Oat pasture should be treated the same as winter wheat pasture in terms of stocking rates and time to initiate grazing. Since grain production is not practical or recommended under grazing, producers should treat oat pasture as a graze-out program or remove it when ready for the next crop. Oats are easily controlled by a variety of herbicides, such as glyphosate and atrazine. The length of effective grazing is a function of stocking rate and weather. Properly stored, oat hay also provides a high-quality feed source. The average yield across 20 varieties at the Experiment Field is four tons per acre. Hay yield was determined at late milk/early dough stage, with an average moisture content of 60%. However, to maximize grazing opportunities, it is important to supply adequate N. For hay late boot to early heading is a good compromise of quality of feed versus quantity harvested. At dough stage, hay should have a TDN of 56% and 10% protein on a dry basis. A nitrate test is recommended. Prussic acid levels should not be a concern.

Silage is another option for spring oats. Oats should be harvested for silage from late milk through early dough stages. Expect silage with a TDN of approximately 60% and 9% protein on a dry weight basis. Before planting oats, check the herbicide history of the desired field. Oats are especially sensitive to triazine herbicides. The optimal planting date depends on location. In northwest Kansas, the optimal date is from the first week of March through the end of March. However, adequate pasture is practical after the optimum planting date. To maximize pasture production potential, it is necessary to plant as early as possible. A seeding rate of two bushels per acre is recommended. When grown for hay or silage, fertility recommendations are similar to those for grain production: 75 to 125 lbs. N per acre. When planted for grazing, an additional 30 lbs. N per acre is recommended. Under adequate soil moisture, a seeding depth of ½-1” is good. Oats can be planted at depths greater than one inch under dry conditions; however, oat seedlings are less vigorous than wheat and can experience difficulties emerging at deeper planting depths, especially after crusting rains.

For more information, see K-State publication MF-1072, *Small Grain Cereals for Forage* at: <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF1072.pdf>