

News Column for Use Week of 2/18/2019
Brett Melton, Extension Agent: Livestock Production
River Valley Extension District
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Preparing for Spring Burns

As we inch closer to spring, I think I speak for everyone when I say I'm ready for warmer temperatures, budding trees, and green grass. Speaking of green grass, one of the best ways to promote growth in pastures is to have a prescribed burn.

Spring burning will increase growth due to early warming of the soil. Some other benefits of spring burning warm-season pastures include: increased animal performance, improved grazing distribution, reduced wildfire fuel, reduction in eastern red cedar trees, and reduction in certain parasites that parasitize cattle.

A key factor of burning is the timing of the burn. Other factors affecting the timing of a prescribed burn are the location in the state and of course, the weather. However, much of the research suggests that the best time to burn is late-spring (late April/early May).

One thing we don't want to underestimate is the amount of groundwork it takes to properly prepare for a burn. The plans you make to prepare for a burn should not wait until the last minute. Now is the time to start lining up people to assist with your burn(s). Also, check to make sure water tanks don't have leaks and that your water pumps are working. You can work to create fire breaks with mowers or dozers. There are numerous other tips and suggestions on how to best prepare for your prescribed burn at www.ksfire.org.

In addition to visiting the Kansas Fire website for additional information, you can also plan to attend the upcoming Burn Workshop in Barnes, KS hosted by the River Valley Extension District. We will meet at the old school building (211 N. Main) on Monday, February 25 at 10:00 a.m. Topics being covered during this workshop include: techniques and planning, reasons for burning (benefits to grass and wildlife), and weather considerations. Speakers will be Dr. Walt Fick, Kansas State University Range Management Specialist, Megan Smith, Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism Wildlife Biologist Technician, as well as speakers from NRCS, and the Topeka Weather Service.

The meeting will last until 3:00 p.m. The cost to attend the meeting will be \$15/person. This fee will cover the materials that will be provided and lunch. A portion of the meal will also be sponsored by the Animal Health Center in Washington, KS. Please RSVP to Brett Melton at your earliest convenience by calling 785-243-8185 or emailing bmelton@ksu.edu, space for this event is limited. If you have any questions, or for additional information, please contact Brett. We look forward to seeing you on February 25th at 10:00 a.m.