

Every Now & Then

Every now and then, we get questions about “what to charge for custom haying”. This year the questions seem to have no season. Could be because haying season is like that Energizer bunny, it just keeps going and going. The cool season hay harvest ran right into the warm season hay harvest.

For those curious about the prices charged, you can find Kansas Custom rates at the KSU Ag Economics website: www.agmanager.info. There’s a tab at the top, Custom Rates.

We are also getting questions about Blue/Green algae in ponds. You can find the do it yourself test instructions on our website: www.meadowlark.ksu.edu under Livestock and Natural resources. There is a jar and stick test, that can be pretty good indications.

I did a bit of research and was surprised to learn there are 4493 ponds in Jackson county, 3773 in Jefferson county and 3292 ponds in Nemaha county. Of course Jefferson County has that one really HUGE one!! Perry Lake.

With that many ponds 11558 in our district, and 241295 in Kansas, we have the capability of holding 1.3 million acre/feet of water. Some best management practices for a pond are in order.

Any management practice that slows the flow of surface water with its accompanying silt and nutrients lengthens the life of a pond.

The single, most valuable management practice, before your pond begins to show signs of over-abundant nutrients, is the development of an unmown, vegetated buffer strip around the pond. This is an area 15-20 foot wide area surrounding a pond that is left unmown or mowed only once or twice a year so that grasses and plants grow knee -high. This vegetation serves to slow the flow of surface water into the pond allowing much of the silt and nutrients to drop out before they reach the pond.

This unmown area, called a riparian [meaning situated along the bank] buffer, may be enhanced by planting wildflowers and seasonal grasses to make the area attractive to butterflies, hummingbirds, dragonflies, and ground - nesting birds.

Prevention is easier than a cure If your pond often has a heavy coverage of algae, this indicates that nutrients have already become a problem.

The best management practices will help limit additional nutrient input, but some type of weed control may be desired. There are two types of algae control: mechanical or chemical.

