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- A real tree should not lose green needles when you tap it on the ground.
- The stand should hold at least 1 gal. of water.
- A 6' tree will use 1 gallon of water every two days.
- Mix a commercial preservative with the water.
- Check the water level every day.
- Secure the tree with wire to keep it from tipping.
- Keep tree away from floor heaters, fire places, or other heat sources.
- Use only UL-listed lights, and no more than 3 strands linked together.
- Use miniature lights—which have cool-burning bulbs.
- Turn off the Christmas lights when you sleep, or if you leave your home for very long.
- Clean the tree stand to improve the tree's water intake, use one capful of bleach to a cup of water.

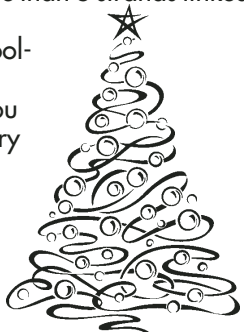
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CONGRESSMAN JERRY MORAN was in St. Francis early Tuesday morning to hear what the people of the First Congressional District had to say. Topics discussed were the closing of United States Department of Agricultural offices

in counties, including Cheyenne County, health care, wind farms, and moving the driver's license office out of the county. Mr. Moran talks to Kermit Bear, left, and Roland Query, center.  
*Staff photo by Karen Krien*

# Representative informs people what can happen if offices are moved

Letter to the Editor:

Recently returning from the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts convention in Wichita, I feel it is necessary for me to share my viewpoints and experience on the United States Department of Agriculture Service Center office closures. I am certain it is fair to say that the consensus of the producers of ranch and farm land that were present in Wichita do not want to see any county Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service offices closed or merged.

Through Legislative and administration research, I have come to find that some very unorthodox decision making has been going on. Monies allocated for conservation practices and administration has been reallocated to other states that have not done so well. Kansas ranks sixth in the nation for conservation applied to the ground.

Why on earth would you try to fix something that isn't broke?

Is this what you call taking from the efficient and giving to the less efficient?

Do we not need more conservation rather than less?

May of 2004 should answer that for you. I was taught and led to believe through time that agriculture was the backbone of this country — has this changed? Do other industries not depend on agriculture anymore?

This decision to reallocate conservation dollars was made by a man that goes by the title of Chief and the name of Bruce Knight. Since this decision, the president has decided to promote Mr. Knight to Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

Arlen Lancaster has since then replaced him as Chief of Natural Resources Conservation Service. Mr. Lancaster said in a recent meeting in Salina that 150 miles to the nearest United States Department of Agriculture service center was of no concern to him.

How many of you producers would like to drive 150 miles every time you visit the center?

It is estimated that the average producer visits the United States Depart-

ment of Agriculture service center five times a year. Now, let's put this in perspective for the average taxpayer.

As an Area I representative of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, there are 18,870 producers in my 18 county area which extends from Cheyenne County to Wallace to Russell to Smith and all in between. I don't like to deal hypothetically however, if 18,870 of us drive half the distance of 150 miles then drove home that would be 14,152,500 miles at the current Internal Revenue Service rate, that would come to \$6,297,862.50. (Which, by the way, is more than the Natural Resources Conservation Service budget was cut for 2008.)

If this were to happen, along with these dollars, how many other dollars would be spent from your current county in relation to saving miles for other trips? Respectfully so, I am sure that you understand the situation producers are in right now.

There are 11 proposed United States Department of Agriculture service center closures and many to follow. Just a few facts to throw into the dilemma are United States Department of Agriculture's budget is \$77.7 billion which is less than 1/2 or 1 percent of the federal budget. Less than 25 percent of that 1/2 or 1 percent of the federal budget is put into farm programs and conservation combines. More than 50 percent of USDA's budget goes to food and nutrition programs.

Perhaps the new farm bill should be renamed the Food and Nutrition Bill.

I have been told by many legislators that it is hard to sell agriculture to urban legislators before elections. It looks to me like more than twice of the money in the farm bill goes to schools and welfare programs.

Where are all the people on welfare—urban or rural?

In my more recent conversations with legislators, they have told me that they have received a few communications from producers concerning this subject matter. It is very obvious to me that if we don't all get involved with communicating to your legisla-

tors, state and federal, then when the economy turns sour, you will have absolutely no right to complain when you have to move to another area for a job.

It is a fact that USDA office closures will create a very large, negative impact on our communities. Farm program payments for this area alone come to over \$191 million which does not include loans, yield increases and conservation practices.

As USDA offices are closed across the state, service, population and money will decline at a progressively negative rate.

I urge all of us, whether we are directly involved in agriculture or not, to individually and through group efforts convey the importance of county offices as they now exist within our state.

Jon Starns  
KACD Area I Representative  
Brewster

## — Ag Talk With Jeanne

Topdressing wheat decisions By: Jeanne Falk, K-State Multi-County Agronomist  
Quite a bit of the wheat in our area is well established and has good stands. During the winter and early spring, many producers topdress their wheat with nitrogen (nitrogen) and possibly a broadleaf residual herbicide. According to Dale Leikam, K-State soil fertility specialist, it is important for producers to properly plan their nitrogen fertilization programs in order to make sure they get the highest possible net return. The four main factors involved in this are timing, source, application method, and rate.

The most important factor in getting a good return on topdress nitrogen is usually timing. It is critical to get the nitrogen on early enough to have the maximum potential impact on yield. While some producers often wait until spring just prior to jointing, this can be too late in some years. For well-drained medium-fine textured soils that dominate our wheat acres, the odds of losing much of the nitrogen that is topdress applied in the fall or winter is low since we typically don't get enough precipitation over the winter to cause significant denitrification or leaching. For these soils, topdressing can begin anytime now, and usually the earlier the better.

On all soils, nitrogen should be applied early enough that it has time to move down into the root zone of the wheat before jointing begins. Surface-applied nitrogen moves into the soil with rain and/or snow, and that is

unpredictable in Kansas. Therefore, the best strategy on most soils is to apply the nitrogen as early as possible to have the best chance of getting a rain that will move the nitrogen into the root zone.

As temperatures warm in the early spring, there is a greater likelihood of getting significant leaf burn from topdress nitrogen applications. This leaf burn generally does not reduce yield prospects if applications are made before the last, uppermost leaves are developed. If the leaf burn occurs at a very late stage of growth—such as flag leaf emergence or boot stage—significant yield reductions are possible.

Most topdressing is broadcast applied. In high-residue situations, this can result in some immobilization of nitrogen, especially where liquid UANitrogen is used. If no herbicides are applied with the nitrogen, producers can get some benefit from applying the nitrogen in a dribble band on 15-18-inch centers. This can help avoid immobilization and maybe provide for a little more consistent crop response.

The typical sources of nitrogen used for topdressing wheat are UANitrogen solution and dry urea. Numerous trials by K-State over the years have shown that both are equally effective. In no-till situations, there may be some slight advantage to applying dry urea since it falls to the soil surface and may be less affected by immobilization than broadcast liquid UANitrogen, which tends to get hung up on surface residues. Dribble (surface band) UANitrogen applications would avoid much of this tie-up on surface crop residues.

Producers should start the season with a certain nitrogen recommendation in hand, ideally based on a profile nitrogen soil test done before the crop is planted and before any nitrogen has been applied. It is not uncommon for many producers to just use the same nitrogen rate year after year. This may result in too much nitrogen being applied some years, and too little in others. Where conditions have been dry and recent crop yields have been low, there could well be some very high levels of residual nitrogen remaining in the soil, and easily within the root zone of wheat. In those cases, a topdress nitrogen application may not increase yields at all. The only way to know for sure is to have a profile nitrogen test done. However, if some nitrogen has already been applied to the wheat crop, it is too late to use the profile nitrogen soil test since it is not reliable in measuring recently applied nitrogen.



Jeanne  
Falk  
Agronomist

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