

News Column

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For Release 01/14/19
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Farm Land Lease Workshop

I don't actually keep a tally of every call, text, or e-mail I receive, but my sense is that land leasing is clearly the number one topic among the wide array of questions I am asked throughout the year.

January is usually the month with the largest volume of leasing questions. That is because many farm land leases are oral leases and Kansas law dictates that oral leases will automatically renew if they aren't terminated at least 30 days prior to March 1. February can be a big month too since some folks remember March 1, but don't remember that they needed to take action 30 days prior to March 1.

This isn't where I'm headed with this topic today, but let's cover lease termination anyway before moving on. To terminate an oral lease in Kansas there are three points to remember. Notice must be given at least 30 days prior to March. Notice must state the termination date as March 1. And, notice must be in writing.

Give me a call if you want to discuss lease termination in more detail.

Now, on to the meeting I think you might want to attend. We will be hosting a Farmland Leasing Workshop at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 30 at Pottorf Hall in Manhattan. Mykel Taylor, K-State Research and Extension Agriculture Economist, will be the featured speaker.

With over 90 percent of Kansas farms and ranches leasing part or all of the land they operate, leasing is an important topic for most producers. Tenants need to have competitive

leases, leases that are profitable for the tenant and landlord alike. And land owners want a fair return on their investment.

We see some one-sided leases – some in favor of the tenant and some in favor of the landlord – but most want leases to be mutually beneficial. The challenge for many though is in knowing what is fair.

The best way to come closer to arriving at a fair lease is for both parties do their homework. Landlords and tenants alike could benefit from attending a leasing workshop every year. There shouldn't be much change from year to year, but you'd be surprised how many leases go on for 20 or 30 years without any discussion between the parties about the terms.

Even crop-share leases, where the percentage shares probably haven't changed in 30 years, should be reviewed at least every five years. Thirty years ago many farmers weren't doing much no-till, we weren't using as many herbicides, and we likely weren't using any fungicides. Changes in farming practices should maybe affect how inputs are shared, or how the crop is shared. Maybe not. But it should be discussed.

Topics that will be covered at the January 30 Leasing Workshop include:

- Differences and similarities of various leasing arrangements: crop-share, fixed cash rent, and flexible leases
- Active management of the landlord-tenant relationship through effective communication
- Calculating an equitable lease using crop budgets, price and yield expectations, and other market-based information

There is no cost to attend the workshop, but reservations are requested by January 28.

Register online at www.riley.ksu.edu, or by any other method that works for you. We still

answer the phone, and I can even take your reservations when I see you at a basketball game. I'll have to e-mail myself immediately so I don't forget, but I'll get you on the list.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmclure@ksu.edu.

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