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## **SORGHUM E-Notes**

### **NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS Ensuring Sorghum's Profitability**

January 31, 2008

#### **Schafer Confirmed as Secretary of Agriculture**

Ed Schafer, former Governor of North Dakota, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the 29<sup>th</sup> Secretary of Agriculture on Monday, January 28. Secretary Schafer's confirmation was accelerated so that he could attend the President's State of the Union address as a member of the Cabinet on Monday evening.

Schafer served as Governor of North Dakota from 1992 until 2000, during which time he advocated for agriculture, diversification of the North Dakota economy and reducing the cost of government. Prior to his Governorship, Schafer served as an executive for the Gold Seal company, a manufacturer of popular brand name products. He was born and raised in Bismark, ND and received a BS from the University of North Dakota and an MBA from the University of Denver.

Secretary Schafer's interest in agriculture was born out of summers on his grandfather's farm in rural North Dakota. His grandfather emigrated from Denmark and turned his homesteaded land into a wheat and livestock farm.

#### **Checkoff Comment Period Closes**

After 60 days in the Federal Register, the comment period for the National Sorghum Checkoff proposal has closed with overwhelming support. The final tally was 191 positive comments and only 26 negative comments. Comments came from a broad range of producers from 10 states nationwide. There were a total of 217 comments on the Federal Register proposal. USDA will now review the comments and incorporate recommendations from comment letters into a final rule.

#### **ICM Receives \$30,000,000 for Ethanol Plant**

The Department of Energy will provide a \$30 million grant for NSP Industry Partner ICM, Inc. to build a cellulosic ethanol plant near St. Joseph, Missouri. The plant will use forage sorghum, corn fiber, switchgrass and corn stover as feedstock and is expected to generate 1.5 million gallons of ethanol per year by the fourth quarter of 2010. This project stands to broaden ICM's horizons from corn-based ethanol to a more diverse range of energy crop-based ethanol production. Another NSP Industry Partner, CERES, Inc., will serve as a co-participant in the St. Joseph project.

#### **Gerald Simonsen Interviews with CattleNetwork.com**

Gerald Simonsen, a sorghum producer from Ruskin, Nebraska and member of NSP's board of directors, visited with Daniel Murphy, a writer for the CattleNetwork.com. They discussed the future of the sorghum industry and the potential effects of a national sorghum checkoff, as well as sorghum niche markets and Simonsen's own sorghum flour plant, Twin Valley Mills. You can read the article by following this [link](#).

#### **NSP Board Meets in Dallas**

The NSP Board of Directors met in Dallas, Texas last week to discuss the progress of the national sorghum checkoff and discuss farm bill policy negotiations. The board also talked about plans for next year's NSP conference. The next NSP board meeting will take place in San Antonio, Texas following the Annual Conference.

### **Farm-to-Fuel Projects Receive \$25,000,000 in Sunshine State**

The state of Florida has pledged \$25 million in grant money to farm-to-fuel projects in the state. This funding is to be matched by \$157 million in private funding. The grants will be allocated among many different projects. One of the notable projects is a \$7 million grant to United States Envirofuels, a Tampa alternative fuel corporation, to build a sugar to ethanol plant that will utilize sweet sorghum for ethanol generation. Sweet sorghum is seen as an excellent opportunity for ethanol production because it is not a food crop.

The \$7 million grant for a sweet sorghum to ethanol plant will go toward the ultimate cost of the \$47 million facility. It will be located in Highlands County in central Florida.

### **NSP Conference Registration Closes Monday**

The registration deadline for NSP's Annual Conference is Monday, February 4. If you haven't yet reserved your place, you can download a form online and fax it to (806) 749-9002 or use the online registration website.

### **Silver Lining to Flooding in Australia**

NSP reported two weeks ago that Australia was looking at a very promising grain crop this year. However, massive flooding in central Queensland has inundated at least 50,000 acres, most of which was sorghum ready for harvest. While the flooding is devastating to this year's crop, there is a silver lining to the destruction. Substantial rains have provided a break in an extreme drought and filled reservoirs that will now hold enough irrigation water to sustain agriculture in the region for four or five years.

### **About Sorghum Notes**

SORGHUM Notes is a publication of the National Sorghum Producers. NSP represents U.S. sorghum producers and works to ensure the profitability of sorghum production through market development, research, education and legislative representation. Visit our website at [www.sorghumgrowers.com](http://www.sorghumgrowers.com). Write to us at National Sorghum Producers, 4201 N Interstate 27, Lubbock, TX 79403. To unsubscribe to Sorghum Notes, please reply to [hannah@sorghumgrowers.com](mailto:hannah@sorghumgrowers.com). Copy and paste "Unsubscribe to Sorghum Notes" into the subject line.

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### **Quote of the week:**

"I don't want to be invited to the family hunting party."  
--Sen. Barack Obama, on revelations that he and Dick Cheney are eighth cousins

### **Interested in Sponsorship Opportunities?**

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