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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

FCIC Proposed Sorghum Pricing Methodology

NSP worked closely with Congress during the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) to change sorghum price elections. In the bill, Section 12009 requires the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to obtain the services of five expert reviewers to "develop and recommend a methodology for determining an expected market price for grain sorghum for both the production and revenue-based plans of insurance to more accurately reflect the actual market price at harvest" and for FCIC to publish the selected methodology for notice and comment on the methodology. Last week RMA published a proposed methodology. Written comments on this notice will be accepted until September 22, 2009. A public meeting will be held on August 20, 2009, at 9 a.m., in Kansas City, Missouri, to discuss the proposed methodology. NSP strongly encourages its members to send a comment to RMA letting them know the impact crop insurance has on your planting intentions and how sorghum is agronomically an ideal crop for your area.

Visit the USDA RMA Web site to view the publication: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/2009/07/grainsorghum.html>

Comments may be sent to:

Quintrell Hollis

USDA, Product Design Branch, FCIC, Risk Management Agency

6501 Beacon Drive, Mail Stop 813

Kansas City, MO 64133

grainpricecomments@rma.usda.gov

NuFarm Ltd. Acquires Richardson Seed

Nufarm Ltd has expanded its seed business by acquiring two U.S. based sorghum companies this week: Vega, Texas, based Richardson Seeds Ltd and MMR Genetics Ltd. Richardson Seeds is a leading producer and marketer of sorghum seed hybrids, with a leading market share in the U.S. and expanding market positions in Mexico, South America, Europe, Japan and the Middle East. The company was founded over 50 years ago and has processing capabilities of 10,000 bags of sorghum seeds per day.

MMR Genetics, which was previously 47% owned by Richardson Seeds, is a global leader in the development of elite sorghum germplasm, used by many of the world's top seed companies. The company conducts grain and forage sorghum research in various countries under the leadership of Dr. Fred Miller, an industry leader considered to be the "father" of hybrid breeding in sorghum. Combined sales of Richardson Seeds and MMR in 2008 totaled approximately \$22 million.

Nufarm's Managing Director, Doug Rathbone said the acquisitions represent high quality assets that will considerably strengthen Nufarm's existing seeds platform. "Sorghum has been a target crop for our seeds business and the addition of Richardson Seeds and MMR brings expertise and geographic diversity in germplasm development and licensing; seed production; conditioning; and marketing and sales."

Nufarm's General Manager of Seeds, Brent Zacharias, said it is particularly important to have secured the ongoing contribution of the management and employees of Richardson Seeds, including company President, Larry Richardson.

Richardson said Richardson Seeds and MMR Genetics customers will continue to receive the high level of service and attention that has always been the case, with Nufarm's ownership providing substantial scale-up capability in both developing markets and breeding efforts.

Court of Appeals Denies Review

In a blow to agricultural interests, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied a request Monday to review a January decision invalidating a Bush-era rule that exempts some pesticides from the Clean Water Act's permitting. A coalition of 22 farm organizations, including National Sorghum Producers, sought a full court review of the decision in the case, which it argued could hamper agricultural production, as farmers may be forced to decide between not applying needed pesticides and risking lawsuits and enforcement actions for discharging without a permit.

"This is just a redundant regulation, because pesticides are already highly tested, and ecological considerations are taken into account as they're going through registration," said Keith Menchey of the National Cotton Council. "This just adds another layer of regulation and burden, with absolutely no increase in environmental protection."

On Nov. 27, 2007, U.S. EPA issued a final rule concluding that pesticides applied in accordance with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) are exempt from the Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. Two different groups of petitioners -- one representing environmental interests and the other representing industry interests -- filed a lawsuit challenging the rule in 11 federal appellate courts.

In April, EPA rebuffed calls from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, ranking members of both House and Senate Agriculture Committees and leading industry groups when it decided not to seek rehearing in the case. In a March letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, Vilsack urged the agency to consider the "significant adverse effect" of the court's decision on farmers and USDA's own pest control activities.

The agency opted instead to seek a two-year stay of the mandate, until April 9, 2011, indicating that it needed time to develop a permitting process that could comply with the court's ruling.

Although EPA refused to ask for a rehearing, a coalition of agriculture groups filed a petition for a full-court review.

"If the court's decision stands, agricultural producers will be required to obtain a permit for an estimated 5.6 million pesticide applications annually," the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture said in a May statement. "Currently, no permitting system is in place to handle the dramatic increase in permit applications. Furthermore, the court's ruling has placed producers in legal jeopardy under the Clean Water Act's citizen-action provisions."

Sweet Sorghum Used for Fuel in South Florida

A South Florida company aiming to make fuel from the sweet sorghum plant has signed a contract with the Seminole Electric Cooperative. Fort Lauderdale-based Southeast Renewable Fuels announced the deal late this Tuesday with the Tampa-based non-profit that supplies 10 electric distribution co-ops in Florida. The contract gives the cooperative the right to buy Southeast Renewables' output through Nov. 30, 2036.

Southeast Renewables plans to develop three ethanol factories near Lake Okeechbee that would process sweet sorghum into biofuel, likely starting commercial production in 2011. The ethanol would fuel electric plants and could generate an initial 25 megawatts or enough to power about 15,000 homes, the announcement said.

Sorghum Research Included in Biofuels Funding Initiative

On July 22 the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the two departments would

jointly select up to \$6.3 million in awards toward research to improve and expand the use of feedstocks for biofuels production. "Part of the solution to the energy problem will be home-grown energy crops," Energy Secretary Steven Chu said. "These projects will help us unlock the true potential of advanced biofuels, decrease our dependence on foreign oil, and create new jobs and a thriving biofuels industry in America."

Sorghum was included in at least one of the funded projects. The University of Nebraska at Lincoln will receive \$390,000 for "Characterization of Nitrogen Use Efficiency in Sweet Sorghum." The project will work to increase the potential of sweet sorghum as a high-yielding and efficient feedstock for biofuels production.

NSP Still Holding ACRE Decision Sessions

The signup deadline for the Average Crop Revenue Assistance Program (ACRE) is August 14th and there is still time to find out how it can work for your farming operation. NSP's Strategic Business Director Chris Cogburn is hosting four information sessions across the Sorghum Belt this week. Each session will examine your individual farm records and determine if ACRE is right for you.

Individualized sessions will be held August 5-10 from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. You still have time to make it to the following locations:

August 7 Perryton, Texas

Old VFW Building, located just south of the Expo Center, 402 Expo Dr. (Leatherman Park)

August 10 Melrose, New Mexico

Melrose Grain, 205 E. Denby St.

If you need additional information, feel free to contact Chris Cogburn at 806-239-1434 or chris@sorghumgrowers.com. State-specific ACRE spreadsheets and more information about what you'll need to bring with you to the session are posted on the home page of our website at www.sorghumgrowers.com.

SICNA and USCP Meetings Next Week in Amarillo

The annual Sorghum Improvement Conference of North America (SICNA) meeting and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) Board meeting will be held in conjunction with one another in Amarillo, Texas next week. SICNA's meeting will highlight sorghum research activities around the country through field demonstrations, tours and presentations. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please contact USCP Research Director Jeff Dahlberg at 806-687-8727 or jeff@sorghumcheckoff.com. Check the NSP [website](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com) for a final schedule. For more information about the USCP meeting, visit www.sorghumcheckoff.com.

Crop Report

Development of the sorghum crop to the heading stage was evident across 49 percent of the acreage, two percent behind last year and nine percent behind the five year average. In Illinois, development was significantly behind at 16 percent headed compared with 70 percent for the five year average. Heading lagged the normal pace in Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota by more than 20 percent, while in Arkansas, heading was nearly complete and slightly ahead of the usual pace. Coloring advanced just two percent during the week to 31 percent complete, slightly behind last year, but 1 percent ahead of the five year average. The most crop development occurred in Louisiana, where 17 percent of the crop began coloring during the week, leaving the State's overall progress 12 percent ahead of the five year average. Despite a significant jump in coloring in Arkansas, development remained one week behind the normal pace. Condition of the crop declined two percent from last week.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

- Aug. 10-12** Sorghum Improvement Conference of North America (SICNA) Research Meeting, *Amarillo, TX*
Aug. 13-14 United Sorghum Checkoff Program Board Meeting, *Drury Inn, Amarillo, TX*
Aug. 17-18 National Sorghum Producers Board Meeting, *Sorghum Headquarters, Lubbock, TX*
Aug. 19 Southeast Area Field Day, *Ottawa, Kansas*
Aug. 20 Dean Lee Research & Extension Station Field Day, Louisiana State University Ag Center, *Alexandria, LA*
Sept. 12 Carleton Milo Days, *Carleton, Nebraska*
Sept. 15-17 Husker Harvest Days, *Grand Island, Nebraska*

About Sorghum Notes

SORGHUM Notes is a publication of the National Sorghum Producers. NSP represents U.S. sorghum producers. The organization serves as the voice of the sorghum industry from coast to coast through education and legislative and regulatory representation. To learn more about NSP visit our website at 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.* If you have questions about the sorghum industry or the National Sorghum Producers, please do not hesitate to call NSP at (800) 658-9808.

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Quote of the Week:

"I am not young enough to know everything."
~ Oscar Wilde

Interested in Sponsorship Opportunities?

Call NSP at (800) 658-9808 to learn more.