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SORGHUM E-Notes

January 7, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:
the voice of the sorghum industry

NSP Board Meeting This Week

The National Sorghum Producers Board of Directors will meet in Lubbock, Texas this Wednesday and Thursday, January 7 and 8, at the NSP offices. The Board will discuss FGIS grading issues, its 2009 Legislative Agenda, farm bill implementation and transitions associated with the new United Sorghum Checkoff Program. For more information, contact NSP at (800) 658-9808.

USDA Implements Changes to 2008 Farm Bill

With the publication of an interim final regulation in the Federal Register last week, the United States Department of Agriculture announced changes to Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) qualifications, program payment limitations, and direct attribution for Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs, which became effective in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill. The new provisions will apply immediately to the 2009 crop year.

As outlined in a USDA press release, the new ruling makes important changes to existing rules concerning:

- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) means testing with separate thresholds and consequences for "farm income" and "non-farm income."
- Direct attribution of benefits whereby limits are applied to the individual whether they are received directly or indirectly through a business entity.
- "Actively engaged" rules that determine whether an individual, or an entity, or an individual within an entity will be eligible to receive specified payments. There are special rules for spouses in these sections, but the landowner provisions are largely unchanged.
- "Substantive change" rules that allow for the addition of individuals or entities to an existing operation.
- Marketing loan program benefits which are excluded from the limitations.
- Other areas, like the ability of public entities to receive benefits.

A copy of the full USDA press release can be viewed and printed [here](#).

The changes are now open to public comments which must be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the date of publication. The official comment period will end on January 28, 2009. Be sure to contact your county FSA office with specific questions about how these new rulings apply to you. We encourage you to review and comment on these rules. For instructions on how to comment, click [here](#).

United Sorghum Checkoff Program Announces Position Openings

The USCP has posted announcements for the positions of Executive Director and Field Services Director. Job descriptions and postings are available at www.sorghumcheckoff.com.

Vilsack's Nomination Hearing to be Held January 14th

The Senate Agriculture Committee will hold a nomination hearing next week to review the nomination of former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack to be the next U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14.

Vilsack was elected Iowa's governor in 1998 and was the first Democrat to win the office in 32 years. He was re-elected in 2002 and is now an attorney at the Dorsey Trial group in Des Moines, Iowa. Iowa ranks second to California in overall agricultural production and is also home to Tom Harkin, the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Harkin predicts an easy confirmation for Vilsack, whose appointment has stirred little opposition.

111th Congress Convened This Week

The 111th Congress convened on Tuesday in Washington D.C. Congress will hold hearings on President-elect Barack Obama's Cabinet appointments which the Senate has yet to confirm. They will focus on completing Fiscal Year 2009 funding bills and working on a multibillion-dollar legislative package to stimulate the U.S. economy.

Although the Obama administration has urged Congress to have stimulus legislation ready to sign by the time the president takes office on Jan. 20, the Senate is not expected to finalize the package until sometime in February. The bill is expected to include money for needed infrastructure projects, as well as provide for some tax incentives. The Obama plan would include credits up to \$500 for most workers, costing roughly \$150 billion. The package will also include more than \$100 billion in tax incentives for businesses to create jobs and invest in equipment or factories. Tax cuts in the amount of about \$300 billion may also be included.

As President-elect Obama begins to wrap up cabinet appointments, New Mexico Democratic Governor Bill Richardson has withdrawn from his nomination to be Commerce Secretary, citing an ongoing investigation in the state. Richardson withdrew as the investigation threatened to upset his confirmation schedule.

Early Registration Deadline Approaches

For the best prices on Commodity Classic registration, register before the early bird deadline of January 14. You may register at www.commodityclassic.com. Commodity Classic is the premier convention and trade show of the U.S. sorghum, corn, soybean and wheat industries.

Sorghum Industry Calendar of Events

NSP Board Meeting	January 7-8	Lubbock, TX
Sorghum Cropping Profitability Seminar	January 20	Saline Center, Saline County, NE
Sorghum Cropping Profitability Seminar	January 21	Deshler, NE
Sorghum Cropping Profitability Seminar	January 22	Franklin, NE
Cover Your Acres	January 20-21	Oberlin, KS
Oklahoma Sorghum Commission meeting	January 26	Alva, OK
Producer meetings	January 26	Garfield, Woods, Alfalfa Counties, OK
Producer meetings	January 27	Kay, Major, Noble Counties, OK
Producer meetings	January 28	King Fisher, Grant Counties, OK
No-Till on the Plains Winter Conference	January 27-28	Salina, KS
USCP Board Meeting	January 28-29	Kansas City, KS
USCG Membership Meeting	February 7-11	Guatemala City, Guatemala
NSP D.C. Fly-In	February 10-12	Washington, D.C.
Commodity Classic	February 25-28	Grapevine, TX

For details, visit <http://www.sorghumgrowers.com/Calendar.htm>.

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:

You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.
-- Henry Ford

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