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SORGHUM E-Notes

July 2, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

New Acreage Numbers Lack Latest Information

The latest USDA acreage report pegs sorghum at a 1.3 million acre decrease in planted acres. Last year, the nation planted 8.3 million acres and this year, USDA has the nation at 6.9 million planted acres. However, the numbers released on Monday do not tell the whole story, as they were collected the first two weeks of June. While South Texas and the Coastal Bend have had a devastating drought this year, a seed industry representative reports that orders for sorghum seed from San Angelo, Texas to Dodge City, Kansas have log jammed his phone line. Large areas of the Texas Panhandle lost early crops like cotton to hail damage, and similar weather events have impacted areas north. With that in mind, the full story about this year's sorghum acreage remains to be told but the number should be higher than recently projected.

House Passes Climate Change Bill, Senate Makes Plans to Move Quickly

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (climate change or cap-and-trade bill) by a narrow margin of 219 to 212. The bill included a hard-fought and extremely important amendment negotiated by House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN). While the bill itself stands to raise both on-farm and household energy costs, Peterson's amendment, among other things, provides U.S. agriculture an offset program administered by USDA that can help to offset the rise in energy and input costs and ensures that agriculture emissions will not be capped. NSP ultimately opposed the bill because of its unknown effects on the industry, but deeply appreciates Chairman Peterson's amendment which is a step in the right direction for the program as it moves to the Senate.

The Senate plans to begin hearings on climate change next week and agriculture is likely to play an even greater role there than it did in the House. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has said he wants to see a comprehensive energy and climate change bill on the Senate floor yet this fall. Even so, all reports indicate that the Senate will be a tough battleground for climate change, which lacks the widespread support it will need from Senators. Congress is in recess this week for the Independence Day holiday.

RFS-2 Comment Period Extended

In response to multiple requests at a hearing last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has extended the comment period on the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS-2) by 60 days. The new deadline for comment is September 25, 2009.

EPA is seeking comment on implementation of the RFS-2 which was part of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2007. The proposed RFS-2 rule would increase the volume of biofuels utilized in the American marketplace, establish categories of renewable fuels and require some fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions comparative to the fuels they replace.

NSP will comment on behalf of the sorghum industry, pointing out that sorghum is an advanced biofuel feedstock which achieves dramatic water and input reductions. NSP will provide evidence that sorghum starch yields the same amount of

ethanol per bushel as corn starch. Sweet sorghum and high biomass forage sorghum are also addressed in the RFS-2 and will be included in NSP comments.

Happy First Birthday to the United Sorghum Checkoff Program

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) this week turns one year old. The program began collections last July 1st with the aim of helping producers improve their bottom lines by delivering cutting edge research, meaningful promotion, and targeted information to sorghum producers nationwide. Now, one year after the start of collections and about six months after beginning operations, the USCP has funded three rounds of research projects ranging from basic production handbooks to next-generation genomics. It has hosted multiple buyers' missions that have forged working relationships between sorghum handlers and international buyers. And the USCP has delivered educational and information resources, including a presence at dairy shows to educate forage users about the nutritional qualities of forage sorghums, recipe cards for the gluten-free market, and fact sheets about the sorghum industry that help educate both growers and the general public. NSP is pleased to have a positive working relationship with the USCP Board, which is active in ensuring the sorghum checkoff delivers meaningful return on investment to producers. Happy birthday, USCP!

Obama Administration Appoints Some State Farm Service Agency Directors

The Obama Administration this week began naming some of the individuals who will serve as State Executive Directors for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at the USDA.

"These individuals have a solid understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our rural communities and will help build on the Obama Administration's efforts to rebuild and revitalize rural America," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Some of the appointees are or have been sorghum growers.

Sorghum Belt appointees include: Adrian Polansky, *Kansas*, former Kansas Secretary of Agriculture; Juan Garcia, *Texas*, Agricultural Program Manager/Assistant State Executive Director for FSA; Francie Tolle, *Oklahoma*, Legislative Policy Analyst for American Farmers and Ranchers and co-owner of Tolle Farms; Dan Steinkruger, *Nebraska*, 32 years experience with FSA programs including former Acting State Executive Director; Trudy Kareus, *Colorado*, Colorado Western Slope Director for former Senator Ken Salazar.

A complete list of both FSA and Rural Development appointees can be found on the [USDA Newsroom website](#).

52 Percent of Sorghum Crop in Good to Excellent Condition

According to the National Ag Statistics Service at USDA, producers had planted 93 percent of their intended sorghum acreage by week's end, two percent ahead of last year and on par with the five-year average. The pace was at or ahead of normal in all States except Colorado, Illinois, and New Mexico. In Illinois, progress lagged normal by more than a month. Twenty-three percent of the sorghum crop was at or beyond the heading stage, equaling last year's and the average pace. In Louisiana and Texas, at least half of the crop had developed heads. Overall, 52 percent of this year's sorghum crop was rated in good to excellent condition, compared with 57 percent a week ago and 49 percent a year ago.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

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| July 17-22 | U.S. Grains Council and United Sorghum Checkoff Program Marketing Meeting, <i>San Diego, CA</i> |
| July 23 | Oklahoma Sorghum Commission and Association Meeting, <i>Goodwell, OK</i> |
| August 11-12 | Sorghum Improvement Conference of North America (SICNA) Research Meeting, <i>Amarillo, TX</i> |
| August 13-14 | United Sorghum Checkoff Program Board Meeting, <i>Drury Inn, Amarillo, TX</i> |
| August 17-18 | National Sorghum Producers Board Meeting, <i>Sorghum Headquarters, Lubbock, TX</i> |

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:

"A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials."
-- Cicero

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