

4201 N Interstate 27
Lubbock, Texas 79403
Telephone: (806) 749-3478
Fax: (806) 749-9002
www.sorghumgrowers.com

SORGHUM E-Notes

June 11, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

Sorghum Scientist Awarded Prestigious World Food Prize

Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, a sorghum scientist who was raised in Ethiopia and made his way to the U.S. through a myriad of educational opportunities, has been awarded the prestigious World Food Prize. The World Food Prize was founded by Dr. Norman Borlaug, Father of the Green Revolution and Nobel Peace Prize winner, and this year's recipient was announced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton this morning in a ceremony at the State Department. The ceremony was also attended by the Secretary of Agriculture and numerous other dignitaries.

Dr. Ejeta, who is now a Distinguished Professor of Agronomy at Purdue University, was awarded the prize for his work in improving sorghum yields and introducing the first sorghum hybrid in Africa. Those hybrids ultimately improved Africans' access to a higher yielding grain crop for food. He also conducted breakthrough research on a parasitic weed called *Striga* that robbed sorghum crops of their yield potential.

In a March 2008 letter recommending Dr. Ejeta for the World Food Prize, NSP Research Advisor Dr. Bruce Maunder said, "Dr. Ejeta's enthusiasm and capacity for work are the driving force so badly needed and highly respected by those fighting food insecurity."

Today, Dr. Ejeta mentors the next generation of African scientists while continuing to pursue his research in his role at Purdue University. In an interview, he said he would likely use the \$250,000 prize to promote the value of science in alleviating Africa's deep poverty and promoting education for children in his home country of Ethiopia.

Our most sincere congratulations go to Dr. Ejeta on this tremendous accomplishment.

Sorghum-Based Ethanol Gets a Boost

NSP worked hard during the 2008 Farm Bill to ensure that sorghum was qualified as an "advanced biofuel feedstock." By qualifying as an advanced biofuel feedstock, sorghum is made eligible for various programs that encourage clean energy production, including one major program written into Section 9005 of the Energy Title of the farm bill. The program established in 9005 pays ethanol plants to use sorghum in their production processes. This program, which was allocated \$30 million dollars according to a USDA press release earlier this week, will be significant for the future of sorghum-based biofuels as it basically provides an incentive for using sorghum to produce ethanol. Rules are expected to be released within the week and NSP will keep members and partners informed of the rules and impact of this program both on sorghum producers and on our ethanol plant partners.

Climate Change Legislation on the Fast Track

The House Committee on Agriculture today held a hearing on the highly-debated cap-and-trade climate change bill that passed the House Energy and Commerce Committee last month. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack was the sole witness on the first panel, and following opening comments and his own testimony, submitted to over three and a half hours of questioning about climate change from Committee members. At press time, the second panel, which includes several farm groups, is beginning its testimony.

Agriculture Committee members, as well as commodity groups like NSP, are deeply concerned about the contents of the climate change bill, as there is very little opportunity for agriculture to benefit, or even reduce losses incurred by this bill as it is currently written. With that in mind, the Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN), is doggedly refusing to let the bill fly through Congress until his committee has a say in its content.

Committee members questioned the Secretary about the cost increases producers can expect from climate change legislation. The Secretary, however, said his department has not yet performed its own analysis of how the bill will affect input costs. Some independent estimates suggest the bill could raise costs for growing sorghum between \$30 and \$40 per acre. Committee members are also adamant that implementation of the program should occur at USDA and not through the Environmental Protection Agency. Other members encouraged the Secretary to advocate slowing the bill so all parties involved have more time to study the legislation's impacts.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has put a June 19th deadline on committees for finishing markups (committee amendment processes) and wants the bill to pass the House before Independence Day recess. The Senate does not have a version of climate change legislation in process but rumor has it the Senate may tack their changes onto a House-passed climate bill. NSP remains involved with this legislation and will represent the best interests of sorghum producers and agriculture in general throughout the committee and floor consideration process.

Crop Progress is Well Ahead of the Average in Many Areas

USDA's weekly crop report noted on Tuesday that by week's end, 74 percent of the 2009 sorghum crop was planted, 13 percent ahead of last year and six percent ahead of normal. Progress was most advanced in the Delta states of Louisiana and Arkansas. With over five days suitable for fieldwork, producers in Kansas, the largest sorghum-producing state, planted 29 percent of their crop during the week, leaving progress well ahead of the previous year and four percent ahead of the average.

Farmers in South Texas are facing severe drought which has affected many crops in the Rio Grande Valley, but observation from sorghum staff in South Texas this week indicates that the sorghum crop is solid, although not stellar. Many South Texas growers elected to plant sorghum this year because the crop is easier to grow with fewer inputs and investments. The southern tip of Texas has not seen rainfall since scattered rain in May, according to the National Weather Service.

According to NSP Field Services Director Matt Splitter, in western and northwestern Kansas, the amount of sorghum acreage is on average or a little higher. Final acreage numbers will be easier to accurately determine after wheat harvest is finished, as producers will then make decisions about double crops. Moisture across most of the state is near average but the timing of that moisture has been out of the ordinary. In western Kansas, producers are still planting and what is planted is barely out of the ground.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

- June 15** NSP Joint Board and Legislative Committee meeting, *conference call*
- June 14-18** Mexico Sorghum Buyers' Mission, *Texas and Western Kansas*
- June 22-25** Mexico Sorghum Buyers' Mission, *Nebraska*
- July 17-22** U.S. Grains Council and United Sorghum Checkoff Program Domestic Marketing Meeting, *San Diego, CA*
- July 23** Oklahoma Sorghum Commission Meeting, *Goodwell, OK*
- July 23** Oklahoma Sorghum Association Meeting, *Goodwell, OK*
- August 11** Sorghum Improvement Conference of North America (SICNA) Research Meeting, *Amarillo, TX*
- August 12-13** United Sorghum Checkoff Program Board Meeting, *Amarillo, TX*
- August 17-18** National Sorghum Producers Board Meeting, *Lubbock, TX*

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.

SORGHUM Notes is sponsored by:

Sorghum Partners, Inc.
P.O. Box 189, New Deal, TX 79350
Phone: (800) 645-7478 Fax: (806) 746-5305
Website: www.sorghum-partners.com
E-mail: information@sorghum-partners.com

Quote of the Week:

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
-- Abraham Lincoln

Interested in Sponsorship Opportunities?

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