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## **SORGHUM E-Notes**

May 21, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

*the voice of the sorghum industry*

### **Climate Change Bill Marathon Underway in House Energy and Commerce Committee**

The House Energy and Commerce Committee started on Monday battling out provisions of the American Clean Energy and Security Act which deals with climate change through a new cap-and-trade system. The 948-page bill only mentions agriculture six times. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-SD) is highly displeased with the bill's lack of attention to the agriculture industry and is demanding that the bill be allowed to be considered by his committee. He says that jurisdictional issues and the lack of attention to agriculture in the current bill necessitate the opportunity for the Agriculture Committee to have some say in the legislation.

In Energy and Commerce, an amendment by Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE) to remove the impacts of international indirect land use changes from life cycle analysis of energy crops was defeated 36 – 20. Peterson says he will not support any bill that bases analysis on international indirect land use. The catch? Peterson holds the keys to the votes of most members of the Ag Committee – 11 of whom are freshman members with districts that are considered vulnerable to defeat in the next election cycle. These members from rural districts will be listening to their constituencies as they voice concerns about the effects of this legislation on agriculture. And House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has called climate change her “flagship issue”, will need those rural votes to pass the bill on the House floor later this summer.

The Energy and Commerce Committee hearing, which began with opening statements on Monday, continues as members work their way through some 400 proposed amendments to the bill. NSP continues to monitor the climate change bill and work with members of Congress to make sure they address grave concerns that sorghum growers and NSP have with the current legislation.

### **In Related News...**

House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Ranking Member Frank Lucas (R-OK) filed a bill last week that would remove international indirect land use provisions from the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS-2) and expand the definition of renewable biomass in rules that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published two weeks ago. International indirect land use penalizes domestic growers of biofuel feedstocks for the effects they may have on land use in other countries – for example, rain forest deforestation in Brazil. At the same time, the EPA's rule does not include any indirect land use penalty for oil production. International indirect land use is disputed across the scientific community because it is difficult and complicated to know the true international effects of domestic cropping patterns. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, further contributing to the angst between the two committees.

### **Mexican Grain Buyers Spend the Week in Kansas**

Hoping to strengthen export markets for the U.S sorghum industry, the [United Sorghum Checkoff Program](#) and the [U.S. Grains Council](#) hosted representatives from Mexico on a fact finding mission this week. They met with Shelee Padgett, NSP Member Services Director, and John Borchers, manager of DeBruce Grain in Abilene, Kansas, on Tuesday. Padgett said the trip is part of the education and market development function of the national sorghum checkoff.

As the two top sorghum-producing states, Kansas and Texas will be the primary focus for exports to Mexico. Mexican cattle and poultry producers have interest in importing sorghum as an alternative feed source. Along with a tour of the DeBruce Grain elevator, the group from Mexico also learned about how grain is stored, merchandised, transported and prepared to be shipped to their country.

The trip continued Wednesday with a tour of Cargill Ag Horizons and a visit with Clayton Short, a sorghum producer in Assaria, Kansas. They also visited AgMark, a grain marketing organization in Concordia, Kansas, and Scoular, an agriculture marketing company in Downs, Kansas. Their trip also included various stops in Texas where they were hosted by the Texas Sorghum Producers. In Texas, they visited ADM at the Port of Corpus Christi and Planter's Grain Coop's facility at Taft.

The [United Sorghum Checkoff Program](#) and [U.S. Grains Council](#) hope to build lasting relationships through the participation in this mission and future missions and hope to move more grain as a direct result. In the future, similar missions will take Mexico buyers to Nebraska, Arkansas, Louisiana, and back to Texas and Kansas.

## **NSP Legislative Committee Adds New Members**

The National Sorghum Producers (NSP) relies heavily on the input of a strong legislative committee to observe happenings in Washington, D.C. and recommend policy direction to the Board of Directors. The 2009 Legislative Committee held its first conference call last week. The call was led by Gerald Simonsen, Committee Chair, of Ruskin, Nebraska. Simonsen, along with NSP staff, brought members of the committee up to speed on issues like climate change, sorghum odor, rules on the Renewable Fuels Standard and implementation of the 2008 farm bill.

Other members of the committee are Donald Bloss, Nebraska; Nathan Johnson, Oklahoma; Dan Krienke, Texas; Matt Lansford, New Mexico; Burl Scherler, Colorado; Dan Smith, Texas; and Jarrod Spillman, Kansas. The committee will hold conference calls as the political environment in Washington, D.C. requires and will meet in D.C. during the NSP Annual D.C. Fly-In. The Legislative Committee is open to add a few more at-large members. If you are interested in being involved, please [contact Hannah](#) at (800) 658-9808.

## **NSP Comments on E15 Recommendation**

The National Sorghum Producers submitted comments last week to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding raising the ethanol blend limit from 10 percent ethanol to 15 percent ethanol. This action, originally requested by Growth Energy, will provide the ethanol industry room to grow as it expands into second-generation technologies like sweet sorghum ethanol production and high biomass forage sorghum production. Read the comments on our website's [regulatory page](#).

## **Just Five Percent of Kansas Sorghum Crop in the Ground**

Thirty-eight percent of the 2009 sorghum crop was planted by the release of Tuesday's crop report, on par with last year's pace, but slightly behind the average. Producers in Illinois had yet to begin planting their crop, leaving progress over 4 weeks behind normal. In Kansas, the largest sorghum-producing state, planting was underway, but with just five percent of the crop in the ground compared with nine percent in 2008 and 13 percent for the five-year average.

## **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](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).* 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:**

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## **Quote of the Week:**

“Let the farmer forevermore be honored in his calling; for they who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God.”

- Thomas Jefferson

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