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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

EPA Releases Proposed Rule on Renewable Fuel Standard

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) this week released a 549-page [proposed rulemaking document](#) for the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS-2). The RFS-2 was created in the 2007 Energy Bill to stimulate investment in clean, renewable fuels. The proposed rule includes many potential impacts on the sorghum industry, both positive *and* negative. However, almost all assumptions about sorghum's roles in the biofuels industry were made without any data to support the rule-making.

The proposed rule, among other things, requires specific reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) as compared to the gas or diesel they are replacing. It also assigns indirect land use scores to various renewable fuel sources. The methodology used to calculate indirect land use is highly controversial, drawing ire from Democrats, Republicans, the ethanol industry, agriculture and others because petroleum-based fuels are not penalized for indirect land use and because it is very difficult to accurately assess true land use change internationally.

Collin Peterson (D-MN), Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, was furious about the EPA's proposed rule, making his opinion known during opening statements at a hearing of the House Ag Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research on Tuesday. The hearing addressed indirect land use and the impact of the renewable fuel standard's impact on land use.

Peterson says he will not support any climate change bill unless there is an ironclad provision barring agency rulemaking. He also said that he would encourage other Democrats not to support climate change legislation. "You are going to kill the biofuels industry. You are in bed with the oil industry. I won't support any climate change bill even if you fix it because I don't trust anybody," Peterson told administration witnesses.

NSP is analyzing the proposed rule and will submit comments on behalf of the sorghum industry. NSP also plans to testify before EPA at a public hearing in June.

Obama Administration Issues Directive to Expand Biofuels

It was a busy week for biofuels in Washington. On Tuesday, President Obama issued a presidential directive to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to aggressively accelerate the investment in and production of biofuels. On a conference call with Energy Secretary Stephen Chu and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, Vilsack also announced that he will help lead an unprecedented interagency effort to increase America's energy independence and spur rural economic development.

"President Obama's announcement today demonstrates his deep commitment to establishing a permanent biofuels industry in America," said Vilsack. "Expanding our biofuels infrastructure provides a unique opportunity to spur rural economic development while reducing our dependence on foreign oil - one of the great challenges of the 21st century."

President Obama directed Secretary Vilsack to expedite and increase production of and investment in biofuel development efforts. Initiatives include refinancing existing investments in renewable fuels to preserve jobs in ethanol and

biodiesel plants, renewable electricity generation plants, and other supporting industries; and making renewable energy financing opportunities from the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 available within 30 days. [Read the entire USDA Press Release here.](#)

2009 Budget Conference Report Passes, Ag Must Defend in 2010

The House and Senate passed their conference report on the 2009 budget last week, leaving direct payments, crop insurance and other ag programs intact. Cuts to agriculture in the 2009 budget drew sharp opposition from commodity groups after the President singled out "large agribusinesses" for budget cuts during a television address in late February.

While the industry has avoided major cuts for the moment, the Administration's [2010 budget proposal](#) was released today and includes several [terminations, reductions and savings](#) that affect agriculture. The Administration proposes reduction of crop insurance premiums/underwriting gains and fees, payments to "high-income" farmers and a phase-out of direct payments to farms with sales above \$500,000. NSP will work with Congress throughout the 2010 budget process, just as it did during the 2009 budget process, to make sure that agriculture is fairly represented in budget negotiations and that the nation's food source does not suffer disproportionately during budget cuts.

All Ag All Day Reaches Amarillo

The Amarillo area now has its own all farm radio station - KZIP 1310 AM. The new All Ag, All Day station is an expansion of the only all farm station in Texas - 900 AM KFLP.

KFLP-AM station owner and farm broadcaster Tony St. James generates more than fifteen-hours of original farm programming every day that broadcasts to one-sixth of the state of Texas as well as parts of New Mexico and Oklahoma.

The syndicated one-hour "Agriculture Today" is also featured on the new, expanded, All Ag, All Day station. Since its debut on three stations in January 2005, seventeen more stations have added this one-hour show to their programming lineup. From original one-on-one interviews with today's newsmakers to audio reports from around the world, Agriculture Today is a day's worth of farm and ranch news and information packed into sixty-minutes.

Both "ALL AG, ALL DAY" stations run markets and weather twice every hour, as well as interesting interviews and breaking agricultural news. [Click here to see if All Ag, All Day is available in your listing area.](#)

Arcadia Biosciences Collaborates for Salt Tolerant Sorghum

[Advanta](#), - formerly Garrison & Townsend seed - a sorghum seed research and marketing company, has reached a research and commercial development agreement with [Arcadia BioSciences](#) for the development of Salt-Tolerant sorghum. Arcadia's Salt-Tolerance technology allows plants to produce normal yields and grain quality under salty water and soil conditions. This expands the range of lands available for crop production and reduces requirements for fresh water. The expected result will be high-yielding crops with a lower impact on the environment and an ability to grow on land currently not suitable for productive farming.

In addition, sweet sorghum has tremendous potential as a biofuels source. By combining technologies such as NUE and Salt Tolerance, Advanta and Arcadia anticipate development of a sweet sorghum biofuels crop that will be a highly efficient alternative fuel source. This can be done while reducing the environmental impact and requiring less fresh water.

NSP Leaders in Washington, D.C. Next Week

NSP leadership will be in Washington, D.C. next week to testify at a hearing on triazine safety and triazine farm usage. Sorghum farmers will participate as part of the producer advisory panel as a more than 10 year old saga on triazine farm inputs continues. NSP also has meetings scheduled about ongoing biofuels and energy issues related to sorghum.

Spring Again: Our First Crop Report of the Season

Thirty percent of this year's sorghum crop was planted by the end of last week, one point behind last year, but on par with the five-year average. Planting was not yet underway in Illinois, Kansas, or South Dakota, and was behind the normal pace in all states except Nebraska, New Mexico, and Texas. [From NASS crop/weather report.](#)

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:

"God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers."
-- Jewish Proverb

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