



NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS

SORGHUM *Grower*

Spring 2012

Special Section:
Sorghum Checkoff
pullout insert

Leading the Charge

NSP Connects Growers with Congress

**Crop Insurance Changes
Pay Off for Sorghum**

**Kansas Farmer Benefits
from No-Till**

**Trade Secrets:
Producing Big Yields**

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Championships are won with performance



Congratulations to the Pioneer winners of the 2011 National Sorghum Yield and Management Contest. Honors include 14 national awards that went to growers planting Pioneer® brand sorghum hybrids. For details on all winners visit us at www.pioneer.com/nsp, then click on State Winners — 2011 NSP Yield and Management Contest for state yield results.

NATIONAL WINNERS

RANK/ENTRANT NAME	State	County	Co. Avg (bu/a)	Yield (bu/a)	Score (bu/a)	Pioneer® brand hybrid
REDUCED-TILL IRRIGATED						
1st Jeff Scates	Illinois	Gallatin		192.73	192.73	84G62
2nd Monte Wright	Texas	Ochiltree		188.48	188.48	84G62
3rd Sunland Enterprises Inc.	Colorado	Baca		180.27	180.27	84G62
NO-TILL NON-IRRIGATED						
1st Levin Farms Inc.	Kansas	Phillips	80.5	185.91	105.41	85G46
2nd Chris Curtis	Missouri	DeKalb	69.8	149.02	79.22	84G62
MULCH-TILL NON-IRRIGATED						
1st Duane L. Vorderstrasse	Nebraska	Harlan	80.0	176.25	96.25	84G62
3rd Hugh D. Scates	Illinois	Gallatin	106.5	178.42	71.92	84G62
CONVENTIONAL-TILL NON-IRRIGATED						
2nd Long Farms, Jerry & Sue Long	Kansas	Washington	92.0	168.52	76.52	84G62
3rd Donald W. Bloss	Nebraska	Pawnee	95.5	164.43	68.93	84G62
CONVENTIONAL-TILL IRRIGATED						
1st John A. Scates	Illinois	Gallatin	-	189.31	189.31	84G62
2nd Wright Farms	Colorado	Baca	-	176.82	176.82	84G62
3rd Scott Jewett	Nebraska	Harlan	-	172.83	172.83	84P74
IRRIGATED BIN BUSTER AWARD						
Jeff Scates	Illinois	Gallatin	-	192.73	192.73	84G62
NON-IRRIGATED BIN BUSTER AWARD						
Levin Farms Inc.	Kansas	Phillips	80.5	185.91	105.41	85G46

National winners selected from state 1st place winners.

Thank you to all the growers who planted Pioneer® brand hybrids in the 2011 National Sorghum Producers Yield and Management Contest. See your Pioneer sales professional about planting a powerful package of Pioneer hybrids on your acres this spring and JOIN THE WINNERS!

To learn more about 2011 Pioneer performance in your area, go to www.pioneer.com/products



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Colorado sorghum producer and NSP Chairman Terry Swanson led a delegation of fellow growers during NSP's annual D.C. Fly-In in February. The group made a total of 75 visits with legislators on Capitol Hill in under two days to discuss the policy priorities and needs of the sorghum industry. Photo by Lindsay Kennedy

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Sorghum Grower is published by the National Sorghum Producers, an organization that represents U.S. sorghum producers and the sorghum industry. NSP is headquartered in Lubbock, Texas, in the heart of the U.S. Sorghum Belt. The organization serves as the voice of the sorghum industry coast to coast through legislative and regulatory representation and education. To subscribe, make address changes, or inquire about membership or advertising, please call (800) 658-9808 or email *Sorghum Grower* editor Lindsay Kennedy at lindsay@sorghumgrowers.com.



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regulatory activities on behalf of sorghum producers**



DC Fly-In, Leadership Training Leave Lasting Impression

By Jordan Shearer, Laverne, Okla., sorghum producer

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to be a representative of the Oklahoma delegation at the National Sorghum Producers leadership training and D.C. Fly-In back in February. The leadership training was a good experience. We dealt with topics ranging from business etiquette and social media to interacting with the press.

Mark Twain famously said that a lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on. I reckon that if Twain were alive today, that quote could be modified to include, "A lie circles the world five times..."

Social media and the hyper-connected world offer many positive attributes for agriculture and sorghum producers. We are now able to reach an infinitely large group of folks to educate and promote the efficiencies that our sustainable summer crop can offer to agriculture producers and consumers alike. However, our industry can also be negatively effected by opponents of production agriculture. I am very encouraged by the proactive approach that many of our NSP staff are currently undertaking to attempt to thwart those who wish to demean our relevancy.

"I went to the D.C. Fly-In and leadership training as a sorghum producer and left as a member of the sorghum family."

The couple of days we spent barnstorming Capitol Hill during the D.C. Fly-In were very educational and not too kind to the feet of us who dusted off our dress shoes. Capitol Hill moves at a lot faster pace than many of us are accustomed. My impression was that the leadership of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees are in support of our major agenda to ensure we have a viable farm safety net that keeps the integrity of our crop insurance program and does not overtly discriminate sorghum producers. The wild card seems to be how the farm bill will get treated once it hits the floor.

While making rounds on the Hill, we spoke out against placing caps on indemnity payments and pressed hard for our respective chambers to pass a bill this year. Obviously, we are in the worst budget situation since the postwar era and it will take all hands on deck to steer the ship through Congress. Our message was pretty clear – In 2011, the farm safety net allowed many of us to write off some of our losses and provided us enough fortitude to plow through another year.

I went to the D.C. Fly-In and leadership training as a sorghum producer and left as a member of the sorghum family. We have an excellent staff and leadership in NSP with CEO Tim Lust and Chairman Terry Swanson. Everyone was professional and well-versed, and I made some lifelong friendships on the trip.

As the demographics of our nation become increasingly urbanized, it is more imperative than ever for us to coalesce around what we believe and place pressure on our elected officials to ensure that agriculture and rural America can continue to prosper. We are the 1 percent feeding this great nation and the world. I am very humbled by our system of government and how it allows citizens the right to advocate for our views and beliefs. It is exciting to be apart of a growing organization that has the wind at its back. As we grow, so does our cause, and we will prevail in ensuring that our sustainable summer crop will have a seat at the table.



Jordan Shearer is a sorghum producer from Laverne, Okla., and chairman of the Oklahoma Sorghum Association board of directors.



Leading the Charge

NSP hosts annual D.C. Fly-In

By Jennifer Blackburn and Lindsay Kennedy

Each year, NSP takes a group of sorghum grower delegates to our nation's capitol to discuss the priorities and needs of the sorghum industry.

In a one-and-a-half day span in February, 21 delegates representing NSP attended 75 total meetings on Capitol Hill with legislators from 17 different states. Those combined states, which included Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas, account for 5.4 million sorghum acres — or 98.6 percent of the total U.S. grain sorghum planted in 2011.

The 75 Hill visits were distributed as follows:

- 22 visits in the Senate
- 10 meetings with Senators
- 12 meeting with Senate staffers
- 53 visits in the House
- 21 meetings with Representatives
- 32 meetings with House staffers



Overall, NSP delegates logged almost 300 man-hours in the House and Senate combined. NSP also met with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency and USAID.

Senate Farm Bill Hearings Begin

As Congress pushes to write the 2012 Farm Bill, NSP has been given the opportunity to testify at hearings on behalf of sorghum producers.

Prairie View, Kan., sorghum grower, Bill Greving, testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 14. Greving, who represented the Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association, talked to the committee about his involvement with the Prairie Horizon Agri-Energy ethanol plant and the benefits the plant provides his community and his crop and livestock operation.

“Farms like ours are proof that ethanol production, grain production and meat production work together,” Greving noted. “In this synergistic system, we are growing feed, fuel and food on my farm.”

Greving also emphasized the economic benefit the plant had brought the community and the importance of programs like the 9005 Program in the Energy Title of the 2008 Farm Bill, which offers incentives for ethanol plants to use grain sorghum as an advanced biofuel feedstock.

NSP also submitted written testimony for the Senate Agriculture Committee's Risk Management and Commodities hearing March 14.

NSP laid out the top three priorities of sorghum producers, starting with crop insurance.

“Our first priority is that no harm should be done to federal crop insurance, which provides meaningful risk management tools to our producers,” the testimony stated.

The biggest challenge from the last farm bill, he said, is the extreme rise in the cost of production for all crops. According to ERS budget data, in 1996 it cost \$183 per acre to grow grain sorghum. ERS projections for 2012 are \$362.99 per acre. This is an increase of \$1.83 per bushel or \$179.99 per acre for sorghum producers. The cost of production today has led to greatly increased risks in agriculture.

“While 2011 was certainly a good year for agriculture, the stakes continue to rise and when prices do turn downward, losses on the farm will accrue at faster levels than ever seen before. We do not have to go back many years to see how devastating that can be in agriculture.”

NSP strongly supports policy choices in the farm bill that provide price protection relevant to today’s prices and costs.

“While there are many ways this can be done, we believe it is a critical piece to the policy puzzle. Producer choices and minimum price protection are NSP’s second and third priorities.”

NSP also asked the committee to consider building incentives for sorghum production into the Conservation and Energy Titles, focusing on the crop’s efficient water use characteristics.

“Sorghum’s ability to make a crop under highly water deficient conditions allows it to fit easily into farms where water is becoming more scarce each year. We suggest strengthening the principles of water conservation language in the Ag Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) of the 2008 Farm Bill to more specifically encourage planting sorghum and other water saving crops.”

Currently, AWEP allows incentives for switching to lower water intensity crops, but a vast majority of payments are going to other projects.

There is also an outlet for water conservation language in existing Conservation Security Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) language, and NSP encourages the strengthening of water conservation options wherever practical. 📌

A New Tool For Broadleaf Control In Sorghum

Sorghum growers finally have a new tool to fight yield-robbing weeds. Huskie® herbicide, a proven broadleaf herbicide in wheat, is now labeled for sorghum. And Huskie is powered by two modes of action, controlling more than 40 broadleaf weeds including Palmer amaranth, kochia, Russian thistle and devil's-claw. Visit www.BayerCropScience.us to learn more.



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Crop Insurance Changes Pay Off for Sorghum

By Lindsay Kennedy

For the better part of a decade, NSP worked with the USDA Risk Management Agency to improve crop insurance price elections for grain sorghum producers.

During the 2008 Farm Bill debate, NSP worked with then Congressman Jerry Moran (R-KS) and others to include a provision to develop a new methodology that was replicable and transparent.

NSP then worked with RMA to refine the new methodology, which uses sorghum prices throughout the Sorghum Belt to calculate the price election.

Chris Cogburn, NSP strategic business director and manager of Sustainable Crop Insurance Services, says the methodology incorporates a time period of 10 years to calculate the price elections.

“NSP invested a lot of time to correct what were very wide spreads between corn and sorghum price elections for crop insurance,” Cogburn said. “With such a wide spread, it was affecting what farmers planted. We wanted to correct that and make insurance on grain sorghum a valid risk management tool for our producers. The drought of 2011 shows how important that change was for sorghum growers.”

As of March 9, 2012, the total difference in indemnities between the old price election calculation and the current method was **\$24.1 million** for 2011 grain sorghum losses, although that number could increase. This was the difference between 93.0 percent (old) and 97.3 percent (new). The change equated to a \$0.25 per bushel, or \$0.45 per cwt, increase in the price election for grain sorghum.

For four sorghum-producing states that endured the greatest losses in 2011, these changes resulted in producers receiving \$14.1 million in Kansas, \$5.3 million in Texas, \$2.3 million in Oklahoma, \$0.9 million in Colorado and \$0.4 million in New Mexico. These five states represent 96.3 percent of all 2011 grain sorghum losses.

“NSP exists to help sorghum producers, and this is one of those areas where a producer needs an organization to affect change that they cannot do alone,” Cogburn added. “It took us a while, but the drought of 2011 shows just how important the change in price elections was for sorghum producers. It made a huge bottom line impact, and it makes sorghum crop insurance a usable risk management tool for our producers.” 🌾



2011 Grain Sorghum

Top 5 states with difference in indemnities and percent of total indemnities

State	Difference	Percentage
Kansas	14,233,910	59.0%
Texas	5,325,083	22.1%
Oklahoma	2,300,160	9.5%
Colorado	936,511	3.9%
New Mexico	428,135	1.8%

2010 Grain Sorghum

Top 5 states with difference in indemnities and percent of total indemnities

State	Difference	Percentage
Texas	1,738,149	45.6%
Kansas	1,175,910	30.9%
South Dakota	165,025	4.3%
Louisiana	113,460	3.0%
Oklahoma	111,601	2.9%

2010 difference in the RMA price election for sorghum

Old System: 89.7%

New System: 97.7%

Difference in price election: \$0.32/bu or \$0.57/cwt

Total Dollar Difference in 2010 Indemnities: \$3.8 million



2011 National Sorghum Producers Annual Yield & Management Contest **WINNER'S CIRCLE**

Each year, NSP honors the winners of its annual Yield and Management Contest at Commodity Classic. The winners represent a broad range of sorghum growers from the traditional Sorghum Belt states to the Carolinas. Regardless of where the crop is grown, these growers are producing big sorghum yields. To learn more about our yield contest, visit www.SorghumGrowers.com.



Jeff Scates

Shawneetown, Illinois

Irrigated Bin Buster

Reduced-Till Irrigated

Pioneer 84G62



Levin Farms Inc.

Kensington, Kansas

Non-Irrigated Bin Buster

No-Till Non-Irrigated

Pioneer 85G46



Score 192.73 (bu/ac)	Yield 192.73 (bu/ac)	Plant Date June 3, 2011
Previous Crop Soybeans	Irrigation Applied 6 in. sprinkle	Harvest Date Nov. 14, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 120,000	Estimated Rainfall 27 in.
Herbicides: Aatrex® 1 qt/ac pre-emerge, Degree XTRA® 2.3 qt/ac pre-emerge		
Fertilizer: 205 lbs/ac liquid N, 250 lbs/ac anhydrous ammonia, 110 lbs/ac P ₂ O ₅ , 150 lbs/ac K ₂ O		
Insecticides: Mustang Max® 3.2 oz/ac broadcast		

Score 105.41 (bu/ac)	Yield 185.91 (bu/ac)	Plant Date June 4, 2011
Previous Crop Wheat	County Avg. Yield 99.1 (bu/ac)	Harvest Date Oct. 26, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 49,500	Estimated Rainfall 25 in.
Herbicides: Bicep Lite II Magnum® 1.5 qt/ac		
Fertilizer: 120 lbs/ac N, 15.5 gal/ac of 10-34-0 and chloride at planting		
Insecticides: Crusier® treated seed		

After winning the Conventional-Till Irrigated category in 2010, Jeff Scates took it a step further in 2011 with the Irrigated Bin Buster Award as the Scates Family continues their dynasty in our yield and management contest. Jeff says spraying fungicide, bumping up their population, and using more nitrogen has helped increase their sorghum yields. The Scates have planted anywhere between 150-1000 acres of sorghum over the last five years on their river bottom land.

Levin Farms Inc. made its debut into our contest with a bang, winning the Non-Irrigated Bin Buster Award with their No-Till Non-Irrigated sorghum crop. Steve and Otto Levin participated in the yield contest winners panel during the Commodity Classic Sorghum General Session in March and said when they crunch the numbers, sorghum is just a good fit for them. "It's a dependable crop for us," Otto said. "We own land and cash rent some land and we always feel comfortable planting sorghum on that land. It's just our favorite crop to go to." Read more about the Levins on p. 22.

Duane Vorderstrasse

Hebron, Nebraska

Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated

Pioneer 84G62



Score 96.25 (bu/ac)	Yield 176.25 (bu/ac)	Plant Date May 30, 2011
Previous Crop Wheat	County Avg. Yield 80 (bu/ac)	Harvest Date Oct. 25, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 65,000	Estimated Rainfall 28 in.
Herbicides: Bicep II Magnum® 2.1 qt/ac pre-emerge		
Fertilizer: 110 lbs/ac liquid N, 28 lbs/ac liquid P ₂ O ₅ ,		

Duane Vorderstrasse is no stranger to high sorghum yields. He has consistently placed in our contest over the last 16 years and has been growing grain sorghum for nearly four decades. The year 2011 was no different, as Duane's 176.25 bu/ac grain sorghum crop earned him first place in the Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated category. Duane says he made the move to strip-till last year, even though they normally use no-till.

"We cleared a 10-inch path and put fertilizer down and then planted right on top of that strip," he said. "I had a perfect stand. That made quite a bit of difference this year, for sure."

Because of his yield success last year, Duane says he will increase the number of strip-till acres in the years to come.

John A. Scates

Sturgis, Illinois

Conventional-Till Irrigated

Pioneer 84G62



Score 189.31 (bu/ac)	Yield 189.31 (bu/ac)	Plant Date June 3, 2011
Previous Crop Soybeans	Irrigation Applied 6 in. sprinkle	Harvest Date Nov. 24, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 120,000	Estimated Rainfall 27 in.
Herbicides: Aatrex® 1 qt/ac pre-emerge, Degree XTRA® 2.3 qt/ac pre-emerge		
Fertilizer: 205 lbs/ac liquid N, 250 lbs/ac anhydrous ammonia, 110 lbs/ac P ₂ O ₅ , 150 lbs/ac K ₂ O		
Insecticides: Mustang Max® 3.2 oz/ac broadcast		

As a member of the yield contest panel during the Commodity Classic Sorghum General Session in March, John Scates said sorghum has become an important crop on his farm in Illinois. "As more technology has come around, especially with the use of fungicides and us just learning more about it, it's really becoming a crop that we have underestimated," he said. "It's becoming a better fit for everyone in our area."

Read more about John's production practices on p. 22.

Jason Gamble

New Zion, South Carolina

Conventional-Till Non-Irrigated

DeKalb 54-00



Michael Fisher

Hebron, Nebraska

Non-Irrigated Food Grade Winner

Fontanelle W100



Score 81.19 (bu/ac)	Yield 150.99 (bu/ac)	Plant Date May 20, 2011
Previous Crop Soybeans	County Avg. Yield 69.8 (bu/ac)	Harvest Date Oct. 24, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 100,000	Estimated Rainfall 28 in.

Herbicides: Bicep II Magnum® 1.5 qt/ac pre-emerge, atrazine 1 qt/ac pre-emerge

Fertilizer: 180 lbs/ac N, 80 lbs/ac P₂O₅, 120 lbs/ac K₂O, trace elements

Score 15.49 (bu/ac)	Yield 114.59 (bu/ac)	Plant Date June 6, 2011
Previous Crop Wheat	County Avg. Yield 99.1 (bu/ac)	Harvest Date Oct. 31, 2011
Row Spacing 30 in.	Seeds/Acre 65,000	Estimated Rainfall 28.99 in.

Herbicides: Lumax® 1.7 qt/ac pre-plant, Five Star® 2/5 pint/ac post-emerge, atrazine 1/2 lb/ac post-emerge

Fertilizer: 115 lbs/ac anhydrous ammonia

Sorghum yield contest newcomer Jason Gamble from Clarendon County, South Carolina, showed just what sorghum can do on the East Coast. The Gambles began growing the crop 10 years ago for the bird seed market and have increased their acreage from 100 acres to 450 acres over the years. Fertility and nitrogen management has been one of the keys to their 139.3 bu/ac yield success. His brother Steve also placed in our national contest with a second place finish in the Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated category with a 152.43 bu/ac yield. With a major market player showing a big interest in locally-sourced sorghum in the Carolinas, more producers are taking a look at what the crop can do for their operations.

Michael Fisher has gotten used to collecting a first place trophy in the Non-Irrigated National Food Grade category because he has won it five times. Fisher says while the marketing aspect of growing food-grade sorghum for human consumption is still developing in his area, he is able to sell his white sorghum for a premium at a local elevator for use in bird seed. When it comes to production practices, he says he sticks to a good fertilizer program year end and year out to achieve quality yields. Fisher splits his acreage between sorghum and corn to add flexibility in his operation. "If it rains early, the corn will make, and if we get late rains in August, we get the added value from our sorghum acres," he said. "We split our risk between the two crops."

2012 Contest Rules

Please read contest rules carefully before completing the entry form. Changes are in bold.

Contest Deadlines

Regular Entries must be postmarked at least 30 days prior to harvest of the contest acreage. Express Entries must be sent via **overnight delivery** at least 10 days prior to harvest of the contest acreage.

Harvest Rules, a Harvest Report Form and a Management Information Form will be mailed to the contestant as soon as the entry is received. The forms must be completed and **in the NSP office no later than December 3, 2012**. There will be no extension of deadlines.

Contestant Qualifications

Contestant must be a paid member of NSP at the time of entry and judging. More than one member of a family may enter, but each contestant must have a separate membership.

Contestant must be a certified FSA owner/operator of the entry plot. A copy of FSA Form 578, including farm summary, must be submitted with the contest entry form.

Contestants can enter more than once, but each entry must be on a separate entry form.

Partnerships can enter under the partnership name if the partnership holds a membership.

Contestants must be at least 14 years of age at the time of entry.

NSP directors, employees and spouses are prohibited from entering the contest.

Contest Divisions

Conventional-Till Irrigated

Conventional-Till Non-Irrigated

Reduced-Till Irrigated

No-Till Non-Irrigated

Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated

Conventional: Any management or cultural practice excluding no-till, ridge-till or mulch-till.

No-Till: No-till means the soil is left undisturbed from the harvest of the previous crop to the harvest of the next crop with the exception of the injection of nutrients with knives or coulters, not sweeps.

Reduced-Till: No-Till as defined above OR Ridge-Till OR Strip Till, each as defined here. **Ridge-Till:** The soil is left undisturbed from harvest to planting except for nutrient injection. Planting is completed in a seedbed prepared on ridges with sweeps, disk openers, coulters, or row cleaners. Residue is left on the surface between ridges. Weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or cultivation. Ridges are rebuilt during cultivation. **Strip Till:** The soil is left undisturbed from harvest to planting except for tillage of a strip of soil no more than 10 inches wide (with or without nutrient injection). Planting is completed in the prepared strip. Residue is left on the surface between the strips. Weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or cultivation.

Mulch-Till: This may include Mulch-till OR Strip Till, each as defined here. **Mulch-till:** The soil may be disturbed one time prior to planting and will have a minimum of 30% residue remaining. Tillage tools such as chisels, field cultivators, disks, sweeps or blades are used. Weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or one cultivation. **Strip Till:** The soil is left undisturbed from

harvest to planting except for tillage of a strip of soil no more than 10 inches wide (with or without nutrient injection). Planting is completed in the prepared strip. Residue is left on the surface between the strips. Weed control is accomplished with herbicides and/or cultivation.

Irrigated: Any field receiving any supplemental water since the last harvest or during the current growing season.

Non-irrigated: Any field that has not received any supplemental water since the last harvest or during the current growing season.

Field Qualifications

A complete field of 5 or more continuous acres, planted in the sorghum seed variety named on the entry form, will be designated as the contest field. The contest field must be designated on an aerial map. The aerial map must be included with the entry and the harvest report. Each plot's harvest report will be limited to a single harvest per year. High-tannin sorghum varieties will not be accepted.

Supervisor Qualifications

A qualified supervisor must be present during the entire harvest and weighing. The supervisor must complete and sign the Harvest Report Form. The supervisor must specify the tillage method. Supervisors MUST be from the following list:

- * Vocational Agricultural Instructor
- * County or Regional Extension Director or Assistant Director
- * Senior NRCS staff person
- * FSA Office Manager, Field Supervisor or Compliance Technician

Supervisors from the following list will **NOT** be accepted and the entry will be disqualified:

- * Private crop consultants
- * Elevator employees
- * Officials of commercial banks or other lending agencies
- * A company representative of any product used in the contest field
- * A relative of the contestant

Harvesting Rules

The supervisor must be present during the entire harvest of the contest plot and must make all field measurements and computations, oversee the weighing, **INCLUDING LOADING AND UNLOADING**, and moisture testing, verify the date of harvest, and report location of the contest field. The contestant must harvest and report at least five continuous acres from the same contest field that was designated on the entry form. The entire field may be harvested and reported.

A load's gross weight must be determined first, followed by empty or tare weight on the same date. Determination of a load's gross weight **must occur before** determination of tare weight. If time and date of weighing are not automatically stamped on weight ticket(s), supervisors must note both time and date of both weighings on weight ticket(s).

Detailed rules for measuring, weighing, moisture testing and calculating the yields will be mailed to contestant on receipt of his/her entry.

Reporting Results

Harvest Reports, aerial map, weight tickets and management information are to be completed and sent to the NSP office postmarked no later than 15 days after the date of the final weight ticket on the specific contest plot. All harvest information must be in the NSP office by December 3. Harvest information arriving after close of business on December 3 will not be eligible for competition. NSP is not responsible for contest reports that are lost in the mail. Reports may be mailed by certified mail to ensure delivery.

Judging

Irrigated Division: The contestant's score is determined by yield only.

Non-Irrigated Division: The contestant's score will be the amount in bushels by which his yield exceeds the 5-year county average for that division as determined by USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. (If an entry is received from a county that does not have NASS yields, the average of the NASS yields of all states that are represented in the contest will be used.)

In the event of a tie, the contestant harvesting and reporting the largest acreage will be declared the winner. If a second tie-breaker is needed, the contestant with the longest time between the entry date and the harvest date will be named the winner.

Any entry is subject to further review. Any contestant committing fraud will be barred from the contest for three years.

Contest Winners

The contestant with the highest score in the county will be named the county winner.

First, second and third place state winners in each division will be determined by score. Scores below zero (0) will not be eligible for state and national competition. Only one state award in each division will be given per membership with the entry with the highest score considered for state awards.

The first, second and third place national winners in each division will be named from the first-place state winners based on score. Only one national award will be given per membership, with only the entry with the highest score being considered for national honors.

Recognition will be given for the highest dryland yield.

Two \$250 cash awards will be given for the highest irrigated and highest non-irrigated food-grade, tan-glume, tan-plant sorghum scores in the contest.

Hall of Fame: Beginning with the 1997 national winners, contestants who win National 1st Place three times in a division will be inducted into the Hall of Fame and will not be eligible to enter that division.

Awards

County and State winners will receive certificates by mail. National winners will receive trophies. Except where noted, no cash awards will be given by NSP.



Memorable '12 Commodity Classic Shatters Records

This year's Commodity Classic was one for the record books. Attendance increased by 25 percent from last year, placing more than 6,000 attendees in Nashville, Tenn., for the annual gathering of the National Sorghum Producers, the National Corn Growers Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers and the American Soybean Association.

Farm families accounted for more than half of the attendance with 3,235 growers, spouses and children attending. Non-exhibitor first-time attendees also increased 52 percent over last year. Classic registration demographic

information showed the average number of sorghum acres per attendee to be 670 with a total average acreage of 2,401 between sorghum, corn, wheat and soybeans acres combined.

Sorghum General Session

Each year during Classic, NSP hosts its Sorghum General Session, which highlights the latest news and trends in the sorghum industry.

This year's session had more than 100 growers, media and industry representatives in attendance. Former Miss America 2011, Teresa Scanlan from Nebraska, was the keynote speaker,

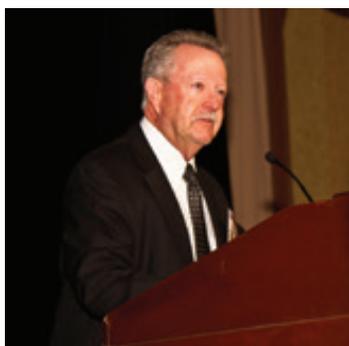
and, at the ripe old age of 19, Scanlan is already making waves as an advocate for American agriculture.

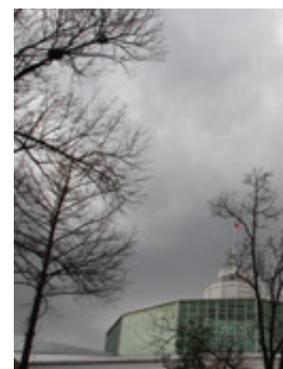
"The younger generation needs to know the importance of farmers and ranchers and why agriculture is important in their lives," Scanlan said. "I may not have grown up on a farm, but I know the importance farmers and ranchers play in my life. I want to serve as the voice for these people who have supported me."

Tom Sell with Combest Sell & Associates, NSP's representation in Washington, D.C., gave an update on farm policy, describing the urgency



(Left Page) Visitors to the NSP booth during the Classic trade show got a unique photo booth experience. (Top Left) Former Miss America Teresa Scanlan delivers the keynote address during the Sorghum General Session. (Top Middle) NSP Chairman Terry Swanson participates in the tradition Chairman's Roundtable before a crowd of 2,000-plus at the Classic General Session. (Bottom Right) Yield contest panelist share their yield success stories during Classic.





(Top Left) Classic attendees seek shelter during a tornado warning in Nashville on March 2. (Top Center) Terry Swanson and J.B. Stewart visit with former Miss America Teresa Scanlan in the NSP booth. (Center Right) Storm clouds pass over the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center. (Bottom Left) Tom Sell of Combest, Sell and Associates discusses farm policy at the Sorghum General Session. (Bottom Center) The Sorghum General Session crowd. (Bottom Right) Entertainment during the Classic General Session.

surrounding the 2012 Farm Bill and the need for agriculture groups to stick together.

“Agriculture is not big enough to be divided,” Sell told the group at the Sorghum General Session. “We must be ready, and I think that’s what the leaders in Congress are trying to do. We don’t know when or how a farm bill may get attached, so the theory is let’s be ready.”

He listed principals to guide farm bill discussions, including the importance of crop insurance.

“If there is one policy that is particularly relevant to the risk management needs of producers today, it’s crop insurance. It is working. Without it where would farmers be who experienced drought in 2011?”

Furthermore, Sell noted that lawmakers should “keep it simple” when crafting the farm bill.

“Growers want to be able to make choices and use their own skills,” he said. “We need policy that will provide relevant assistance when needed.”

Finally, Sell said another guiding principal in developing the farm bill should be regulating agriculture as needed. He used the Renewable Fuels Standard as an example.

“The RFS is an investment. It’s the nation pushing to invest in a domestic, homegrown source of fuel. The RFS has been important in the growth of the agriculture economy.”

NSP Chairman Terry Swanson of Walsh, Colo., gave the annual “Sor-

ghum State of the Union” address, discussing the importance of risk management tools for crop production.

“I farm in what was the epicenter of the Dust Bowl,” Swanson said. “Like other places around the Sorghum Belt, it was really, really dry on my farm this year. It just underscores the importance of a crop safety net. I wouldn’t be standing here today if it weren’t for that.”

“Thankfully, NSP was able to make some important changes in the 2008 Farm Bill price elections. They added \$24.1 million directly to producers’ indemnity payments,” Swanson explained.

He concluded by discussing the significance of biofuels and energy policy to the sorghum industry.



Did you get your picture taken in NSP’s photo booth during Classic?
Download it at Flickr.com/SorghumGrowers

"We've made 15 trips to Washington, D.C., in the past 22 months working on bioenergy," Swanson said. "We are working fervently to get sorghum included the supplemental rule of the Renewable Fuels Standard as an advanced biofuel. Achieving this would be a game changer for our industry, meaning as much as \$0.75 to a \$1.00 of ethanol, adding more value and demand to our product."

The session ended with a producer panel consisting of NSP Yield and Management Contest winners Otto and Steve Levin from Kensington, Kan., Monte Wright from Perryton, Texas, and John Scates of Sturgis, Ill., who discussed the production practices that worked well for them in their respective regions.

Read more about the panel in "Trade Secrets" on page 22 and learn more about the other NSP Yield and Management Contest winners on page 10.

Ag Groups Urge Farm Bill Passage

NSP joined NCGA, NAWG and ASA during Classic in a joint statement released March 1 urging Congress to pass a new farm bill this year.

"Commodity Classic provides our organizations with an opportunity to come together to discuss important policy issues facing our industry," the statement said. As Congress continues work on the next farm bill, our organizations agree that an affordable crop insurance program is our No. 1 priority.

"We also stand ready to work with House and Senate Ag Committee leaders to create farm programs that provide risk-management tools to growers when they are facing a loss beyond their control.

"We urge Congress to pass a new farm bill this year to provide the

level of certainty in America that a short-term extension cannot."

Taking Cover

Adding to an already memorable Commodity Classic, tornado warnings and extreme weather swept across the Southeast and the Nashville area March 2 forcing all 6,000-plus attendees to seek shelter in the lower levels of the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center.

Fortunately, after a 30 minute "take cover" the all clear signal was given and business went on as usual.

2013 Classic Heads to Florida

NSP looks forward to another successful Commodity Classic next year in Kissimmee, Fla., Feb. 28 – March 2, 2013. Visit CommodityClassic.com for information on registration, accommodations and more. 🇺🇸

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The advertisement features a close-up of several tall sorghum panicles with reddish-brown grains against a background of cracked, dry earth. The text is overlaid on the image, with the main slogan in large, white, bold letters with a black outline. The Triumph logo is a red shield with a grey border and the word 'Triumph' in a stylized, grey, italicized font. The contact information is in the bottom left corner.

FAR FROM CONVENTIONAL

Kansas grower finds success with no-till

By Jennifer Blackburn

In the fall of 1992 a dad and son set out to custom harvest a family member's final sorghum crop three months after the individual passed away.

This father-son partnership farmed land of their own using conventional-till methods, but this particular crop they were custom harvesting was grown using no-till.

As yield expectations for the crop began to formulate, so did ideas from the pair. Their highest sorghum yield came in 1990 at 44 bushels per acre—a crop they felt was the best they had ever raised. However, the crop they just cut averaged 99.8 bushels per acre.

The difference in yield potential between the two farming methods was clear, and after going home to compare the results, the two made a decision that incidentally changed the way they farm to this day.

"That was a huge eye-opener," said Jack Schmitt, a Scott County, Kan., farmer. "We couldn't believe the yields that resulted from that harvest, and my dad and I kind of saw the writing on the wall together—it was a big deal."

The very next year, Jack and his dad Steven began transitioning all of their dry-land ground into no-till and now have land that has not seen a plow since September of 1993.

As for their best yield after the switch, Jack said they achieved 144 bushels per acre, which more than triples their

best yield when using conventional-till and far exceeds the Scott County 5-year average of 78 bushels per acre.

"Since we switched, things only continue to improve," said Jack. "Going to no-till translated into tremendously better yields."



we ever had before," said Jack. "This ground can really soak up a big rain now, and there's very little runoff."

Jack said early in their transition to no-till, their area received a considerable amount of rain one night, filling five and a half inches in the gauge.

Water Efficiency

Jack said water-use efficiency was also a factor when he and his dad decided to go 100 percent no-till. In the early 1990s his grandfather was still farming and attended a Kansas State University field day where a rainfall simulator was being displayed.

"The demonstration my grandpa saw only lasted 40 to 45 minutes," said Jack, "but he came home and talked about it for an hour and a half, twice as long as the demonstration, so that was another big eye-opener."

Added soil moisture and increased filtration rates on dryland ground in an area that averages 19 inches of rainfall per year has proven itself as one of the most significant advantages of switching to no-till, he said.

"We have a lot better infiltration rates on the ground than

"We hurried to the shop to check on things the next morning," said Jack. "Looking around, we thought we had missed the rain because there was no water standing in the field.

"That's when we really learned about infiltration rates and how much things had changed in that regard, and we've had incredible infiltration rates since then."

A Unique Home Remedy

Another item that helps Schmitt farmland retain moisture and preserve top soil is a custom, homemade combine header used to harvest their grain sorghum. This homemade sorghum header follows the concept of headers created in the 1980s that were mounted on L2 Gleaners.

Popularity of the L2 Gleaners diminished in the late eighties, according to Jack, and he and his dad questioned whether or not the header would work on the new Gleaner R series combines, so they went in a different direction for a couple of years.

However, Jack and his dad later found they still preferred the header designed for the L2 Gleaners. So, they bought a new corn header, and with the help of Jack's brother Mike, they decided to convert it themselves to the older model.

"We couldn't do it the same, but the concept was the same as what was designed in the '70s and '80s," said Jack. "We had to re-invent the wheel as far as where to mount the sickle and make it all come together, but we've certainly benefitted from this piece of equipment."

So what is the added edge this homemade header provides? It has a minimum cutting height of 10 inches, allowing Schmitt to leave extra stubble in the field. This means more snowfall gets captured, and it helps protect the soil from wind erosion.

"If we are able to leave a little more stubble in the field, it acts as a good snow fence and provides a windbreak," said Jack. "It really gives you all the benefits of residue, as well, and keeps the ground from baking out as much."

A Crop Rotation That's Critical

Jack said retaining winter moisture is necessary to allow him to grow another sorghum crop the following year and that sorghum is a critical component to his crop rotation.

"One year we were getting ready to check moisture and were out in the field preparing to summer fallow the milo

stalks to raise wheat, and we had a full moisture profile," said Jack. "We said to ourselves, 'why are we summer fallowing a full profile of moisture?'"

"So we planted it to milo again and began raising continuous milo. It does just as well as milo in wheat stubble, dependent upon rainfall."

Jack admits he and his dad initially ran into weed problems by monocropping sorghum, but they have been able to help alleviate the weed control problem in grain sorghum by planting in rotation with wheat and Roundup Ready corn.

"It helps by changing crops to get away from weeds that hurt us with milo," said Jack. "Otherwise, if we didn't have a weed problem, we would plant milo over and over."

Other crops have worked their way into rotation on the Schmitt family farm over the years like soybeans and sunflowers, but none have quite reached the standard that grain sorghum has set.

"Grain sorghum is kind of our benchmark as far as making money. Everything else has to measure up to it."

Jack said soybeans came close but never made any more net income than his grain sorghum did, and sunflowers, even in a good year, fell short.

"Grain sorghum is kind of our benchmark as far as making money," said Jack. "Everything else has to measure up to it."

A Progressive Mind Set

Jack said he is blessed to have the opportunity to work with parents and a family who are very progressive, and said, contradictory to the norm, he is often the one stuck in the past while his dad is the more progressive one of the pair.

Scott County, in general, is a progressive area of Kansas, and when Jack and his dad decided to switch to no-till almost 20 years ago, it has forever changed their farm.

"No-till is the most sustainable form of agriculture that we've got," said Jack. "It's absolutely essential in maintaining the soil's productivity, and we're just trying to interfere with nature as little as possible."

TRADE SECRETS

Three NSP Yield and Management Contest winners share how they produced big sorghum yields



By Lindsay Kennedy

National Sorghum Producers Yield and Management Contest winners Monte Wright from Perryton, Texas, John A. Scates of Sturgis, Ill., and Otto Levin of Kensington, Kan., shared their trade secrets during a panel discussion at the Commodity Classic Sorghum General Session on March 1.

The three different growing areas the panelists represented gave an interesting backdrop for the discussion with each grower reviewing what the game changers and challenges were when they produced their award-winning sorghum yields in 2011.

Game Changers

Wright, whose farm in the Texas Panhandle endured one of the worst droughts in history, says a lower plant population played a significant role in his yield success last season.

"There is a huge benefit from planting a lower population, which allows the sorghum to tiller during good times, not to tiller so much during bad times, and then it allows for a much larger stalk," Wright explained. "We don't have the rainfall like other areas, and lower populations just allow us to have

a lot better harvest ability. I believe that was a game changer for us this year because of the severe drought."

Farming in Illinois river bottom land requires a different strategy for Scates, who says a solid fertility program is the key to their high sorghum yields.

"When we started growing sorghum five years ago, we didn't treat it as well as our corn crop," Scates said. "We did a little experimenting and realized that to manage high yielding sorghum, we needed to throw a little more at it. With our high humidity, especially with irrigation in our area, we've discovered that fungicides really help take away the disease pressure we've had. We now treat all our sorghum with a fungicide treatment and that has been our biggest game changer."

It's all about soil testing for brothers Otto and Steve Levin, who were winners of the Non-Irrigated Bin Buster Award. The duo says their purchasing of a hydraulic soil probe four years ago revealed they had been under-fertilizing.

"The hydraulic soil probe has really helped our operation because we can go out and grab a lot of soil tests in

a short amount of time," Steve said. "We started sending the samples to a lab in Kearney, Neb., and they recommended we start applying chloride into our fertilization, and that really made a big difference."

Why Sorghum Works

Limited water availability did not stop Wright from producing high yielding sorghum, even despite the record drought in his area.

"I don't have the larger wells that some farmers in my area do who raise corn and other crops, but I can still take a small amount of water, 12 inches is what I used last year, and raise a really nice crop even during one of the worst droughts in history," he said. "I know a lot of guys in our area put down 25-30 inches of water on corn and possibly didn't raise any. It means a lot to me that I can grow a very drought tolerant crop, and I can use my water when it needs it, I can save it when it doesn't, and it can do very well in hot, dry conditions."

For the Levins, the flexibility allowed by sorghum's planting window is beneficial. After upgrading to a different planter a few years ago, they were unable to get a corn crop planted.

"With the planting window from sorghum, we were able to get it planted, which was a big deal to us," Otto said.

Sorghum's durability in challenging growing conditions has benefited Scates.

"We have a wide range of soil types in our area because of the river bottom land, and sorghum seems to really fit with some of our tougher soils with its ability to plant a little later in the season past corn and to be able to withstand the heat pressure," he said. "That's where we've really found sorghum to fit in on our farm, and it is doing really well for us."

Controlling Weeds

All three farms agreed one of the best ways to control weeds and grass in sorghum is to keep the fields clean before planting.

Scates typically plants his sorghum following a soybean crop.

"We spray the soybean crop probably three times to keep the weeds down and then we use a fall burn down program," Scates said. "That really keeps the field clean before you go in and plant sorghum. Then we put a good pre-emergence down, the sorghum shoots up to get a good cover, and we usually don't have a problem after that."

The Levins also use a fall burn down program with the addition of an atrazine application.

"The atrazine has done a really good job of keeping that field clean up until planting time," Otto said. "This past year, there were a couple of fields that were so clean I hesitated to even burn it down again before we did plant."



Steve added that the sprayer is one of their most important pieces of machinery.

"It's really important to get out there at the right time and never let the weeds get ahead."

Wright has seen success with using a high residue cultivator. He applies a 15- to 17-inch band of pre-emergent herbicide for broadleaf weeds and grasses and then later cultivates the middle areas that did not receive the treatment. This effective practice, he says, has really saved him money.

Marketing Their Crop

Sorghum markets can be as diverse as the three states where Wright, Scates and Levin grow the crop. Wright says he had buyers fighting over his sorghum this year.

"We are fortunate in Ochiltree County to have Texas Farm, a very large hog

from their farm. Unit trains to their north in Nebraska also provide a market outlet for sorghum.

"A lot of times if they are trying to load that unit train and we've got sorghum in storage they'll get a hold of us and bid it up," Steve explained.

Marketing has not come as easy to Scates, who is one of a small, but growing, number of sorghum farmers in his area. Co-ops often have to shut down their lines and clean out their pits before accepting a sorghum crop, making the marketing process more difficult.

"Being in a river bottom area, it's a little hard to sell your crop forward because you don't know if you're actually going to get a crop or not," he said. "We can lock in the basis, which we did this year. In the future, I can see us doing more aggressive marketing with our sorghum like we do our corn."

The Role of Crop Insurance

In a year when extreme weather conditions plagued the Sorghum Belt, there's no doubt that crop insurance has been a vital risk management tool.

"This year, we did have quite a dependence on our crop insurance," Wright said. "It was the first time in many years that we had collected on insurance on sorghum. You go many years thinking, 'Why do I carry this?' And then you get a year like this, and it is very important for us to have that to fall back on."

Scates says the sorghum crop itself acts as an insurance policy.

"It's hard to get some of these high-risk areas covered where we plant our sorghum," he said. "Sorghum is a good tool for us because it's about 70 percent of what it costs to plant corn. It's a little easier on us and our decision making."

"It means a lot to me that I can grow a very drought tolerant crop...and it can do very well in hot, dry conditions."

Monte Wright, Perryton, Texas

production facility," he said. "They recently told me that if every farmer in our county would double their sorghum acres, it still wouldn't be enough to feed that facility."

In Kansas, the Levins market their grain to a local ethanol plant 15 miles



Managing risk through on-farm storage

*Story by Shelee Padgett
Layout by Lindsay Kennedy*

John Williams sold his sorghum for an additional 70 cents per bushel over the price of corn in 2011.

He did not sell the grain for the cash price at harvest. Instead, he stored the crop and sold it in July.

On-farm storage has been a vital part of the Williams' family farming operation for many years. John farms with his father and son in southern Illinois where they raise grain sorghum, corn, wheat and soybeans.

In addition to on-farm storage, Williams has a state-of-the-art dryer that allows him more leeway in making production and marketing decisions.

"In a competitive industry, one of the most profitable strategies has been wait to sell," Williams said.

To compliment his marketing strategies, the on-farm storage allows his operation the flexibility of harvesting at higher moisture content, if needed.

"There are times you can let milo dry down in the fields, although last year was not one of them," Williams said. "Every milo acre had to go through our dryer since the moisture content coming out of the fields averaged high 20 percent to low 30 percent due to our abnormal weather conditions."

Even with high moisture content, Williams's storage still paid big dividend.

"We knew we were going to store our milo because of the condition of the crop, but the cash price at harvest was weak, plus I would have been docked as much as \$2.50 for drying. In the end, it cost us 50 cents to 60 cents to dry on the farm. That is a huge difference in your net profit."

Williams does 100 percent of his farm's marketing.

"I try to keep a high defensive base and sell when the markets rally up," he said. "I also sell in 1,000-2,000 bushel

contracts so I have a lot of contracts, but we are blessed with a strong local market, and I typically sell our grain 20 cents to 70 cents premium over the price of corn."

As farming operations have grown more integrated, on-farm storage has become increasingly helpful for other reasons.

Ted Schneider farms grain sorghum, corn, cotton, rice and wheat with his wife and son in Lake Providence, La. While he does not own permanent storage on his farm, he rents structures and uses temporary bag system storage.

On-farm storage has provided a highly cost-effective risk management tool for Schneider's operation.

"By having storage, I get maximum capacity out of my harvest equipment. Not to mention, I do not have to wait in line at the elevator during harvest," he said.

Schneider said those efficiencies have real consequences because delays at harvest are expensive and hurt his bottom line.

While he plans to invest in permanent structures of his own in the future, the bag system allows him the flexibility of moving grain throughout his four farms. Although the grain bags do not give him the ability to dry the grain, the benefits are tangible through his marketing efforts.

"At harvest, I was quoted a price of 80 cents under," Schneider said. "Knowing I had a high moisture content, I would have also paid 30 cents for drying. Instead, I stored the grain and picked up a March contract that was a 60-cent improvement in basis."

Schneider noted he avoided the \$0.15 per bushel trucking charge by storing his grain because the buyer paid for the

charge. Furthermore, he also did not have to pay the carrying cost for the grain sorghum he stored, a charge that is often built into the futures market.

The volatility in the market, long lines of trucks at the local elevator, and the push to maximize harvest equipment potential are continuing to drive interest in on-farm storage. In fact, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports that on-farm storage capacity increased 2 percent from 2010, with a total of 12.8 billion bushels capacity for 2011.

Dr. Samuel McNeil, associate extension professor and extension specialist with the University of Kentucky, suggests producers do not have to have on-farm storage to take advantages of markets, but storage makes it easier.

Anyone considering making the hefty investment in a grain storage facility should ask several important questions, including "What profits are gained by having storage?"

He also adds that the facility should be a closed loop handling facility and should be completely and thoroughly planned out for efficiency.

"Constructing the wrong size bin or placing a bin in an awkward location could necessitate a very costly remodeling or modification when the facility is expanded or when additional mechanization is desired at a later date," McNeil said.

The USDA Farm Service Agency continues to offer their Farm Storage Facility Loan Program, which provides low-interest financing for farmers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. For more information about the program, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.



SORGHUM SHORTCUTS



Sorghum growers sought for inputs study

SGS and Strategic Marketing Research have been contracted by the United Sorghum Checkoff Program to conduct an in-depth scientific research project for the sorghum industry. This is strictly a scientific research project and does not involve sales of any kind.

The survey involves tracking all inputs used by sorghum growers to raise, harvest and market their sorghum crop. Starting in June 2012, sorghum growers will be participating in the research to provide an in-depth study of all inputs and outputs relating to the crop. The data will be used to assess the carbon footprint of growing sorghum versus other crops, and a model will be developed to demonstrate these interactions.

As a survey participant, sorghum producers will be asked to keep specific information for their inputs and outputs as they go through this year's growing season.

If you are a sorghum producer interested in participating in this series of four 5-to-10-minute surveys online, please contact Dusti Fritz at 785-564-0299 or dusti@sorghumcheckoff.com.

We will not publish any individual's data or use data for any unintended purpose.

Yes! I'm interested in participating in this study.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

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Mail to NSP, 4201 N. Interstate 27, Lubbock, Texas 79403



Participants of Syngenta's Leadership at Its Best program pose in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., Feb. 6, 2012. The program provides sorghum growers with leadership, media and issues training to better equip them to lead the sorghum industry.

Leadership at its Best

In the days leading up to NSP's annual D.C. Fly-In in February, NSP and Syngenta hosted "Leadership at its Best," which provides leadership, business etiquette, and media training to sorghum growers while educating them about issues impacting the sorghum industry and agriculture.

"We believe that strong grower leadership is the foundation of a successful commodity organization," said NSP Terry Swanson. "Syngenta's 'Leadership at its Best' has been a great opportunity for us to provide to our fellow sorghum growers."

Participants represented a broad range of sorghum-producing states, and included Blake Tregellas of Perryton, Texas, James Born of Booker, Texas, John Williams of McLeansboro, Ill., Lynn Belitz of Fullerton, Neb., Jordan Shearer of Laverne, Okla., Kathy Brorman of Hereford, Texas, and Mike Baker of Trenton, Neb.

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