

FINAL PERSPECTIVES |
FROM THE FIELD | p. 10

2015 NSP YIELD |
CONTEST RESULTS | p. 16

STANDING |
AGAINST THE PEST | p. 30



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Grower

WINTER 2016

WORLD RECORD YIELD SET

Maryland grower attributes world record
non-irrigated sorghum yield to management

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 8** **Rigdon Sets World Record**
Maryland grower attributes record-setting yield to management
- 16** **2015 Yield Contest Results**
See the top sorghum yields from growers around the country
- 30** **Standing Against the Pest**
Sorghum growers and researchers share their perspectives on the sugarcane aphid

DEPARTMENTS

- 5** **Editor's Desk**
- 6** **Capitol Hill**
- 10** **From the Field**
- 22** **Sorgonomics™**
- 34** **Sorghum Shortcuts**



NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS

SORGHUM Grower

WINTER 2016



30

ON THE COVER: Optimal weather coupled with strategic management decisions created the perfect growing season for Harrison Rigdon on his Maryland farm, affording him the top yield in the NSP Yield Contest and a new world-record non-irrigated sorghum yield.




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Editor's Desk

Achievement through Adversity



When I look back at 2015, I wonder where the year went. At times I've felt like we were on a roller coaster, but instead of experiencing the g-force on the way down from the roller coaster's peak, the sorghum industry has felt the skin on our face pressed back, hair flying and stomach turns at a steep upward trajectory. Don't get me wrong, we've taken the softer slopes up and down and had to crawl back up to certain heights to achieve optimal momentum, but all-in-all, it's been a thrilling year.

There were many milestones and records set in 2015. Sorghum jumped out early in January with its first appearance in the Wall Street Journal with an article titled, "Sorghum is Hot, and It's Gluten-Free." In the spring, National Sorghum Producers conducted its second Vote Yes campaign to further the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. The referendum passed by an extraordinary margin of 97 percent.

Additionally, the 2015 growing season experienced exceptional weather in most regions of the U.S., which, coupled with strong demand, afforded more acres and some phenomenal yields. USDA reports indicated 8.7 million acres of grain sorghum were planted, a 23 percent increase over the previous year, and a new national average yield record was set at 77.7 bushels per acre. To top it off, a new world record non-irrigated yield won the NSP Yield Contest at 239.85 bushels per acre. Read more about the winner on page 8.

Since June, the U.S. Department of Energy has invested \$62.5 million in sorghum research. DOE created a new program under the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy focused solely on sorghum. With this, the Transportation Energy Resources from Renewable Agriculture program made the single-largest contribution to sorghum breeding in history.

On the policy side, NSP was deeply involved in the farm bill implementation process and banded together with the rest of agriculture to fend off attacks to crop insurance in a monumental way during budget agreements led by tremendous leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. NSP has also worked extensively with Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Moran (R-KS) who has agreed to work with USDA to make sure additional ARS funds will go to sorghum research.

While we have had a tremendous year in the sorghum industry, we've met a lot of adversity as well, and in this issue, you will read about some of affliction our industry and our producers have endured along the way. Grain market outlooks (page 22), among other issues, indicate we've got a long year ahead of us full of trials, but if there's one thing I've learned growing up a farmer and rancher's daughter with six years working for the sorghum industry, we are a resilient set of people. Through adversity, we build character and become stronger, and National Sorghum Producers will be with you every step of the way.

Jennifer Blackburn
NSP External Affairs Director

RFS Finds Place in Presidential Debate

By Jennifer Blackburn

Presidential politics are in full swing, and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Nov. 30 announcement on the renewable volume obligations (RVO) under the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS), candidates are lining up to bat on the issue, trying to stay in the box while dodging curves from their opponents.

The agency increased the blending requirements across the board to a total of 18.1 billion gallons. This move by the EPA breached the so-called blend wall but fell short of congressional intent. Members of Congress and a few organizations were pleased to finally see the RVO released while others took a more displeased stance, saying the levels were not enough and the EPA is out of step with the administration's other departments, putting the future of the industry in jeopardy.

The release comes at a crucial time and has brought the issue into the limelight for many reasons. The RFS is currently two-thirds of the way done with 10 years under its belt, and only five years remain after 2017 at the start of a new commander in chief and an administration change. There's a lot riding on the issue for more than its direct stakeholders, leaving many wondering what the future of the program holds and which side of the box those presidential candidates are dug into to swing from.

Congressional endorsements are also throwing around the batter, especially from representatives in the "Big I" states where ethanol rules much like the Iowa caucuses' media coverage during an election. Representative Steve King (R-IA) recently took heat from the Iowa press for his endorsement of republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz who, until recently, was unafraid to address his opposition to the RFS. This left many wondering how King could support a candidate who opposes an industry critically important to his home state.

The ethanol industry has made Ted Cruz public enemy No. 2. behind Big Oil. In fact, America's Renewable Future is running an extensive media campaign high-

lighting Cruz's position on ethanol and his support of subsidies for the oil industry. His position on the RFS has been unrelenting until a Dec. 5, 2015, event at the FreedomWorks Rising Tide Summit in Cedar Rapids where Cruz spoke favorably about ethanol while also expressing his commitment to expanding market access and saying the industry could survive without the RFS.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has wasted no time criticizing Cruz for his lack of support of ethanol. Trump appeared early as an avid supporter and even started an Iowa rally with a closed-door meeting with leaders of POET, the world's largest ethanol producer.

While her position on ethanol has evolved over the years, democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton likewise backs ethanol, penning an op-ed in May in Cedar Rapids' *The Gazette* affirming her support. Clinton said the RFS can continue to be a powerful tool to spur the development of advanced biofuels and expand the amount of renewable fuels in the U.S. fuel supply.

Marco Rubio also sees the danger of pulling the RFS out from under rural communities. He understands billions of dollars, many from America's heartland, have been spent to build the ethanol industry, and without policy certainty, much of the investment would be rendered worthless. Rubio said he feels the RFS should be allowed to continue until it expires when ethanol has a chance of being a mature industry that can stand on its own.

The ethanol market has and will continue to experience drastic market fluctuations, and like agriculture, it's hard to find an industry as resilient as the renewables industry. Millions of dollars have been invested, plants go up, plants idle, and those who run the industry are wholeheartedly into it, putting a lot on the line for the sake of a smarter, more efficient energy source.

In a time of uncertainty with a tough economic forecast, especially in rural communities, National Sorghum

Producers believes now is not the time to step away from momentum generated from one of the most successful energy policies ever enacted. The RFS has created jobs, boosted rural economies, lowered costs at the pump, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and U.S. dependence on foreign oil all while creating steady demand for U.S. sorghum and corn.

The fact is, biofuels has managed to do something agriculture has struggled to do in the last 50 years—have a meaningful influence on the presidential debate. The last republican debate of 2015 focused on national security. While terrorism, ISIS and immigration were leading topics, trade and agriculture certainly were not.

The federal ethanol mandate may not be the hot button issue, but it is an important one that affects every single American. With obvious differences of opinion by each of the presidential candidates in the lineup, this issue is one of many voters will consider come Election Day.

The proposed rule on the standards released for 2014, 2015 and 2016, posted in June, received 670,985 comments—the vast majority of which were against a reduction in the original RFS volumes, showing the EPA that close to a half a million Americans support the progress made by the RFS.

The 2014 standard was released two years late due to the EPA's surprise at the amount of negative comments they received on that proposed rule, which was posted in November 2013. That proposal received 344,947 comments. This level of individual weigh-in is extremely atypical for any proposed regulation and demonstrates the vested interest agriculture, rural communities and thousands of other Americans have in the success of the ethanol industry.

Built from the ground up in the heart of America, ethanol is bringing components of agriculture into the limelight this presidential election, and few months remain to see which candidate hits the grand slam and has a real say in energy policy in America and the ethanol industry's future. ♣

Congress Wraps Up Year with Spending, Tax Packages

On December 18 of last year, Congress completed its work on an Omnibus bill to fund the government through the remainder of the fiscal year as well as a package, which made some expiring tax provisions permanent while extending others. The agreement reached on both bills included some victories and compromises for both Republicans and Democrats, as well as some big wins and missed opportunities for agriculture.

In the Omnibus, the focus of the negotiations was over the inclusion of certain policy riders. Pertaining to agriculture, the agreement included a repeal of Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (MCOOL) for beef and pork products, which avoided trade retaliation from Canada and Mexico. Also included was a provision for the orderly marketing of commodities through certificate authority (a significant relief to crops routinely put under the loan), a ban on closure of Farm Service Agency offices, as well as provisions blocking politically-charged dietary guidelines and greenhouse gas regulations on manure management systems.

Unfortunately, there were a few opportunities to provide regulatory relief to producers that were missed. Not included in the bill were policy riders that would have blocked Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) regulation, regulations on power plants that would drive up energy costs, the listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken, state and local biotech labeling regimes, and penalties on farmers who have not been able to come into conservation compliance due to redtape.

These policy riders were blocked by congressional Democrats—many of whom made their support for

the bill contingent upon their exclusion, and with a large number of House Republicans refusing to vote for the pending measure, GOP leadership was forced to compromise. The primary wins for Republicans include the lifting of a four decade long ban on oil exports, changes to the visa waiver program intended to prevent entry of terrorists into the country, and a two-year suspension of the Affordable Care Act "Cadillac tax" and medical device tax.

The package of tax provisions that passed alongside the Omnibus included some significant wins for agriculture and small businesses. Section 179 was made permanent at the expense limitation of \$500,000 and phase out amount of \$2 million, plus these amounts are indexed for inflation beginning in 2016. Also included was a full three-year extension of bonus depreciation with a phase out over the following two years. Additionally extended through 2016 were the second generation biofuel producer credit and the biodiesel tax credit.

Appropriations committee leaders, including Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Chairmen Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Robert Aderholt (R-AL) deserve credit and thanks for fending off amendments that would have harmfully reopened the Farm Bill. Agriculture Committee Chairmen Mike Conaway (R-TX) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Members Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) also deserve praise for their vigilance in preventing harmful Farm Bill amendments. Many of the same challenges will present themselves in 2016 and, hopefully, some new opportunities, as well. ♣



MARYLAND GROWER ATTRIBUTES WORLD RECORD-SETTING YIELD TO MANAGEMENT

By Michelle Hochstein

Farming has come a long way since 1728. The Rigdon family of Jarrettsville, Maryland, has been through it all, perfecting their management practices and producing outstanding crop yields year after year.

Eleventh-generation farmer Harrison Rigdon is at it again. With a yield of 239.85 bushels per acre, Rigdon not only took first place in the 2015 National Sorghum Producers Yield Contest in the no-till non-irrigated category, but he also set a new world record for non-irrigated grain sorghum. The previous record was 225.46 bushels, set in 1999.

Rigdon is no stranger to national yield contests. His family has been entering the National Corn Yield Contest for more than 20 years. In 2014, Rigdon took first place in the national A-Non-Irrigated category and this year his father, John, took second place in the same category at the state level.

Currently, Rigdon Farms is operated by Harrison, John and Harrison's mother, Andrea. They grow grain sorghum, corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and produce. They operate on 2,200 acres, which has been passed down since 1728, when the original land was granted by King George II.

Rigdon and his father began growing grain sorghum about 10 years ago. Currently, they feed a portion of it to their cattle and sell the rest to broiler operations on the eastern shore such as Perdue Farms.

"Grain sorghum is a nice fit because it is a lower cost to produce than corn, which makes it a little more economical for me to use as a grower and to feed my cattle," Rigdon said.

Because of his family's recent success in the national corn contest, Rigdon said he decided to implement

some of his corn management practices when growing grain sorghum in 2015.

"Not everything was the same, but I

“ I based my model off what I do on the NCGA contest and put what I could toward the grain sorghum contest. It seemed to pay off huge dividends. ”

based my model off what I do in the NCGA contest and put what I could toward the grain sorghum contest," Rigdon said. "It seemed to pay off huge dividends."

Rigdon's high-yielding sorghum crop followed a previous grain sorghum crop and was planted at a rate of 100,000 seeds per acre in mid-June 2015 into codorus silt loam at a temperature between 65 and 70 degrees. The field is located in a river bottom with organic matter around 4.5 percent, adding to fertility.



RIGDON FARMS WORLD RECORD NON-IRRIGATED SORGHUM YIELD 239.85 BUSHELS PER ACRE

Seed: Dekalb DKS38-88
Seeds Per Acre: 100,000
Row Spacing: 15 inches
Rainfall: 33 inches
Date Planted: 06/15/15
Date Harvested: 11/09/15
Fertilizer: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potash
Fungicide: Headline
Herbicide: Lumax, Atrazine

When planting, Rigdon suggested going at a slower pace in order to maximize seed-to-soil contact.

"It's important to not get in any hurry when you are planting or preparing for the next season," Rigdon said. "Take your time, and don't be afraid to try something new."

Rigdon kept his field clean with pre-plant applications of Lumax and atrazine.

Regarding fertility practices, Rigdon applied manure and an additional 100 pounds of nitrogen pre-plant using a 30 percent formulation. He followed this in-season with three sidedress passes at 50 pounds each using urea and ammonium sulfate. Total nitrogen, phosphorus and potash amounts were 250-100-150.

In addition to micronutrients like zinc and boron, Rigdon also applied Headline fungicide twice during the growing season to foster plant health.

"It's important to keep the plant healthy and green as long as you can," Rigdon stressed.

To track the crop's progress throughout the season he took multiple tissue and soil samples. He also walked the field once per week to monitor crop conditions.

Management plays a huge role in Rigdon's operation, just as it can for every sorghum grower. There is always room to improve management practices, and sorghum growers like Rigdon are proving that it can make a difference in yields.

"I treated my sorghum like my corn," Rigdon said. "It's just something you have to keep your eye on." ‡



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From the Field

Joe Pennington, 65 *Raymondville, Texas*



1. How will you try and push your sorghum yields in the future?

Our plan this season is to explore more precision ag practices, improve soil health, and utilize new varieties that are better suited to our growing region.

2. What one lesson from 2015 will impact your 2016 production practices?

The wet season of 2015 reminded us of the importance of the timeliness of all our cultural or production practices. It is important to not try to produce outside the proven planting window.

3. Will there be any changes to your 2016 sorghum management?

We will stick to practices that have been truly successful

in the past while incorporating some new and innovative concepts that have shown promise. Also, we will re-employ some dated practices that have paid rewards in the past.

4. What is your greatest risk exposure in planning for 2016?

The uncertainty of our volatile commodity prices and the unexplained continued increase in costs of our basic inputs still cause us the most concern.

5. What is your number one goal for the 2016 crop?

We will continue to work to cultivate new markets for our commodities and regain the yields that produce a fair and rewarding return on our investment.



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From the Field

Shane Beckman, 33
Seldon, Kansas

1. How will you try and push your sorghum yields in the future?

I will try different timing with fungicides, maybe an early application. I will also be applying fungicide when the milo is 8-10 inches tall before heading (v6 stage).

2. What one lesson from 2015 will impact your 2016 production practices?

I need to work on water timing, and I have more to learn to answer water timing questions. I think a couple fields of milo were watered too much toward the end. The one thing that stood out to me is where I had the best water I thought I would have the best sorghum, but that was not the case. I overwatered about 1.5 inches, which totaled 8.5 inches of irrigation. The milo that had similar rainfall and management and only received 5-6 inches of water yielded 15 bushels better.

3. Will there be any changes to your 2016 sorghum management?

With the rotation we are set up with we will not be

changing anything. We farm in a cropping system that relies on our planned rotation.

4. What is your greatest risk exposure in planning for 2016?

This coming year it will be a tossup between rain fall and commodity prices. I can't afford to change anything. If I cut back on fertilizer or inputs, I will be hurting myself in the end. While some may be prone to getting emotional due to lower crop prices, we are sticking to the fundamentals. Our fundamentals are a strong agronomic program focused on yield and a solid grain marketing program. In the past when we have cut back to save costs, it has hurt the farm in the long-run.

5. What is your number one goal for the 2016 crop?

While it would be fun to hit 250 bushels per acre for the contest, my real goal is hitting the 200 field average.

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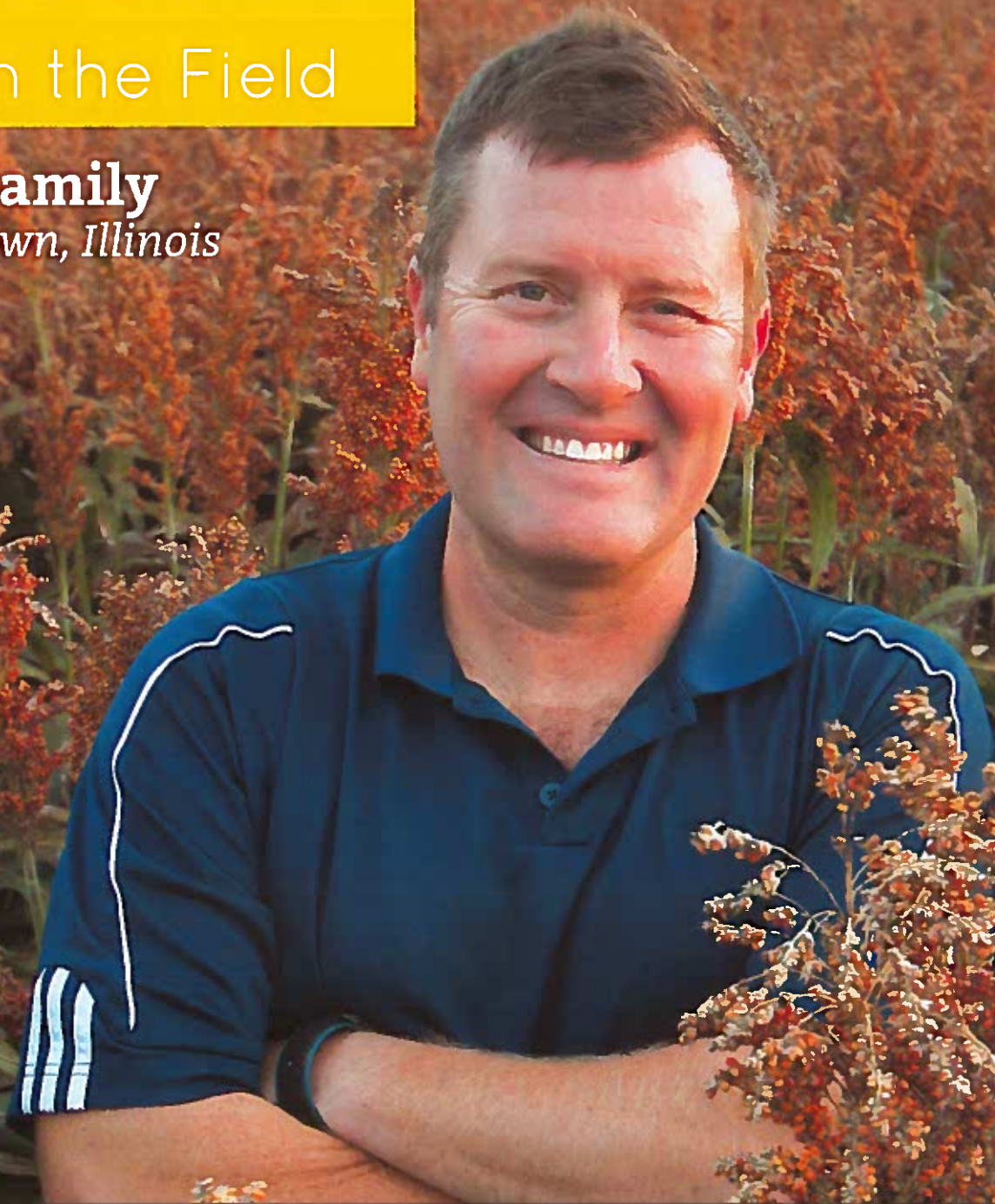
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From the Field

Scates Family Shawneetown, Illinois



1. How will you try and push your sorghum yields in the future?

We will try to experiment more with micronutrients in furrow and post applied. We will also try different timing of nitrogen applications. Plant population is another one, we may try to decrease from the 120,000.

2. What one lesson from 2015 will impact your 2016 production practices?

We will try to apply fungicide a little earlier next year.

3. Will there be any changes to your 2016 sorghum management?

We will use less nitrogen in the pre-planting stage and move to a later post date.

4. What is your greatest risk exposure in planning for 2016?

The greatest risk for our farm is flooding from the nearby rivers. Unfortunately, there is not much we can do about that.

5. What is your number one goal for the 2016 crop?

Our main goal is to bring our overall yield up 10 percent with better management of our inputs. I would really like to hit 250 bushels per acres in a few spots.

Let's Discuss



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2015 NSP Yield Contest Results

SINCE 2014, National Sorghum Producers has been challenging farmers to strive for a 250 bushels per acre yield. With prizes like a one-year lease on a new pick-up, an ATV and lawnmower on the line, growers pushed the limits of their production practices and the crop to attempt to meet the 250 yield challenge. Although the 250-mark was not reached this year, a new world record was reached by Rigdon Farms in Harford County, Maryland, in the no-till non-irrigated category with a bin-busting 239.85 bushels per acre. The national and state winners will be recognized at the NSP Yield Contest Awards Dinner on Friday, March 4, 2016, during Commodity Classic, March 3-5 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Congratulations to this year's NSP Yield Contest winners!

NATIONAL WINNERS *Note: National winners are selected from state first place winners*

Reduced-Till Irrigated

1 233.39 bu/ac
Ki Gamble
Kiowa County, KS
Pioneer 84G62

2 210.09 bu/ac
Ronald Meyer
Dallam County, TX
Pioneer 84P80

3 206.92 bu/ac
Bill Wright
Baca County, CO
Pioneer 84G62

No-Till Non-Irrigated

1 239.85 bu/ac
Rigdon Farms
Harford County, MD
DEKALB DKS38-88



2 218.94 bu/ac
Van Zee Ranch & Feedlot Inc.
Charles Mix County, SD
Sorghum Partners K35-Y5

3 199.94 bu/ac
Harry Johnston
Fulton County, PA
DEKALB DKS37-07

Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated

1 198.08 bu/ac
Robert Santini, Jr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

2 189.60 bu/ac
Debra L. Vorderstrasse
Harlan County, NE
Pioneer 84G62

3 150.39 bu/ac
Mitchell Boys Farms
Webster County, KY
Pioneer 84P80

Double Crop Non-Irrigated

1 172.13 bu/ac
Robert Hoffines
Lancaster County, PA
Pioneer 85Y40

2 165.19 bu/ac
Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust
Davidson County, NC
Pioneer 84P80

3 130.22 bu/ac
Fike Farms
Hidalgo County, TX
DEKALB DKS53-67

Double Crop Irrigated

1 183.00 bu/ac
Chris Santini
Warren County, NJ
DEKALB DKS37-07

2 168.78 bu/ac
Nathan Johnson
Cimarron County, OK
Pioneer 84G62

3 149.02 bu/ac
Harold Mai
Finney, KS
Pioneer 86G32

NATIONAL WINNERS, *continued*

Conventional-Till Non-Irrigated

1 188.73 bu/ac
Santino Santini, Jr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84P72

2 176.53bu/ac
Sydney P. Copeland
Chowan County, NC
Pioneer 84P80

3 170.23 bu/ac
David Justice
Cherokee County, KS
DEKALB DKS36-06

Conventional-Till Irrigated

1 237.93 bu/ac
Jim Boehlke - Bell-Key Farms
Canyon County, ID
Pioneer 85Y40

2 194.81 bu/ac
Scott Jewett
Harlan County, NE
Pioneer 84P72

3 176.62 bu/ac
Galen Berning
Wichita County, KS
Pioneer 84P72

STATE WINNERS

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
Reduced-Till Irrigated						
1st	Arkansas	Cross	Adam Fisher	142.43	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Arkansas	Clay	Twin H Farms - Melanie Haywood	135.94	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Arkansas	Clay	Twin H Farms - Steven Haywood	135.13	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	Colorado	Baca	Bill Wright	206.92	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Colorado	Baca	H2O Farms	153.80	DuPont Pioneer	36G08
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Mark Randell Farms	104.95	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Georgia	Pulaski	Trey Dunaway	169.18	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	Joseph A. Scates	171.03	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Xiowa	KJ Gamble	149.04	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Haskell	Pete York	159.50	DEKALB	DKS53-53
3rd	Kansas	Comanche	Darrol Miller Farm, Inc.	152.92	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Missouri	Scott	David Bollinger, Jr.	170.40	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Missouri	Pemiscot	Chris Mehrlie	163.83	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Missouri	New Madrid	Dicky Hanor	154.70	DEKALB	DKS5400
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Brad Robison	200.27	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	188.20	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
3rd	Nebraska	Hitchcock	Mike Baker	175.78	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Sharon Santini	193.54	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Oklahoma	Texas	Jerod McDaniel	150.03	DuPont Pioneer	86P20
1st	Texas	Dallam	Ronald Meyer	210.09	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Texas	Lipscomb	L and L Farms - Lynn Bom	175.20	DEKALB	DKS36-06
3rd	Texas	Hidalgo	Heron Castillo	121.96	Sorghum Partners	SP6929
No-Till Non-Irrigated						
1st	Alabama	Barbour	Steven Helms	100.95	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
2nd	Alabama	Escambia	Weber Farms, LLC	96.02	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	93.52	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Colorado	Logan	Danny Wood	109.03	DEKALB	DKS28-05
2nd	Colorado	Kit Carson	Farms S Incorporated	92.30	DEKALB	DKS29-28
3rd	Colorado	Kit Carson	Jerry Stahlecker	88.10	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Delaware	Kent	Frank G. Hrupsa	125.40	DuPont Pioneer	84G62

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
1st	Florida	Columbia	Mark & Taylor Randell	73.85	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	Mike Scates	133.57	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Indiana	Clark	Terry Vissing	171.14	DEKALB	DKS44-20
1st	Kansas	Finney	Vulgamore Ventures	179.95	DuPont Pioneer	86G32
2nd	Kansas	Finney	Tip Off Farms	178.97	DuPont Pioneer	86G08
3rd	Kansas	Lane	Dry Lake Farms	177.68	DuPont Pioneer	86G08
1st	Kentucky	McLean	Philip W. Logsdon	172.70	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Kentucky	Carlisle	Bean Farms LLC	152.28	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Kentucky	Webster	Pat Thompson	137.42	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Maryland	Harford	Rigdon Farms	239.85	DEKALB	DKS38-88
2nd	Maryland	Montgomery	William F. Willard Farms LLC	172.88	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Missouri	Cooper	Brumback Farms, Inc.	136.75	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Missouri	Gasconade	Sassmann Farms LLC	102.79	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	184.84	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Nebraska	Pawnee	Matthew J. Bloss	162.14	DEKALB	DKS51-01
3rd	Nebraska	Hitchcock	Mike Baker	141.09	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Matthew C. Santini	185.61	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	New Jersey	Warren	Ron Sigler	156.13	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
1st	North Carolina	Yadkin	Peter Fleming	147.52	DEKALB	49-45
2nd	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	140.40	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	North Carolina	Gates	Jason Riddick of Riddick Farms	109.47	AgVenture	AV6R41
1st	Oklahoma	Garfield	Ratzlaff Cattle Inc.	127.23	DuPont Pioneer	85P05
2nd	Oklahoma	Nowata	Scotty Herriman	110.09	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton	Harry Johnston	199.94	DEKALB	DKS37-07
2nd	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Michael Shearer	183.46	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Van Zee Ranch & Feedlot Inc.	218.94	Sorghum Partners	K35-Y5
2nd	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Dave Knoll	176.32	DuPont Pioneer	88Y41
3rd	South Dakota	Lyman	A & A Schindler Farms	137.71	DuPont Pioneer	89Z5
1st	Texas	Lipscomb	L and L Farms - Lynn Born	108.22	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Virginia	Surry	E. Keith Seward	109.35	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	West Virginia	Jefferson	Burns Farm	166.00	DEKALB	DKS38-88
Mulch-Till Non-Irrigated						
1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	143.11	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Delaware	Kent	A. Downes Warren, Jr.	112.09	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Rusty McLeod TT-MR-RM Farms	79.04	DuPont Pioneer	38P17
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	John Mark Scates	133.97	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Washington	Long Farms - Jerry & Sue Long	155.63	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Saline	Keith Short	153.89	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
3rd	Kansas	McPherson	Jesse Koehn	135.57	DuPont Pioneer	85G03
1st	Kentucky	Webster	Mitchell Boys Farms	188.76	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Kentucky	McLean	Coke Farms	186.61	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Maryland	Queen Anne's	A. Downes Warren, Jr.	122.95	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Missouri	Scott	David Bollinger, Jr.	184.51	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Missouri	Livingston	HRB Farming Partnership	178.37	DEKALB	DKS44-20
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Debra L. Vorderstrasse	189.60	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	169.13	Sorghum Partners	SP6929
3rd	Nebraska	Pawnee	Matthew J. Bloss	164.93	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Robert Santini, Jr.	198.08	DuPont Pioneer	84G62

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
1st	New York	Oneida	Robert Z. Pawlowski	145.68	DuPont Pioneer	87P06
1st	North Carolina	Perquimans	Laurence W. Chappell	160.20	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	149.78	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Cimarron	Drew Allen	136.35	DEKALB	DKS37-07
2nd	Oklahoma	Garfield	Ed Regier Farms	134.48	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Oklahoma	Texas	Fischer & Fischer	110.72	DuPont Pioneer	85Y34
1st	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Bob Shearer	187.99	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	South Dakota	Lyman	Cody Hoffman Farms	161.34	DEKALB	DKS28-05
2nd	South Dakota	Brule	Van Zee Ranch & Feedlot Inc.	159.14	Sorghum Partners	SP3303
3rd	South Dakota	Aurora	Ronald Glessendorf	152.38	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Texas	Nueces	Jim Massey	126.49	Sorghum Partners	SP6929
2nd	Texas	Wilson	Robert D. Yosko	120.05	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Virginia	King William	John N. Mills III	81.25	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	West Virginia	Mineral	Chris Miltnerberger	69.12	DuPont Pioneer	84G62

Double Crop Non-Irrigated

1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	83.55	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Florida	Lafayette	Rusty McLeod & Terry Folsom	107.66	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	Bond	Marvin J. Stoecklin	118.42	DEKALB	DKS36-06
2nd	Illinois	Bond	Stephanie Gaffner	112.37	DEKALB	DKS36-06
3rd	Illinois	Wayne	Greg Keyser	87.03	Dyna-Gro Seed	766B
1st	Kansas	Saline	Kansas JAG Ltd - Mark Pettijohn	124.14	DuPont Pioneer	85P05
2nd	Kansas	Saline	Came Farms, Inc.	122.75	DuPont Pioneer	86P20
3rd	Kansas	Kiowa	Paul Rush	103.51	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Kentucky	Daviess	Pat Thompson	118.53	DuPont Pioneer	86P90
2nd	Kentucky	Daviess	Philip Thompson	111.57	DuPont Pioneer	86P90
3rd	Kentucky	Daviess	Joe Thompson	108.40	DuPont Pioneer	86P90
1st	Maryland	Montgomery	William F. Willard Farms LLC	97.30	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Santino Santini, Jr.	188.24	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	165.19	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Caddo	Bryan Vail	107.65	DuPont Pioneer	86G32
2nd	Oklahoma	Garfield	Ratzlaff Cattle Inc.	104.74	DuPont Pioneer	86P20
1st	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Robert Hoffines	172.13	DuPont Pioneer	85Y40
2nd	Pennsylvania	Adams	Jessica Deshong	121.51	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Dave Knoll	70.16	Sorghum Partners	2212
1st	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	130.22	DEKALB	DKS53-67

Double Crop Irrigated

1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	103.64	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Florida	Lafayette	Terry Folsom & Rusty McLeod	104.62	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Kansas	Finney	Harold Mai	149.02	DuPont Pioneer	86G32
2nd	Kansas	Kiowa	Nusz Farms	146.75	DEKALB	DKS29-28
3rd	Kansas	Comanche	Darrol Miller Farm, Inc.	145.14	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Chris Santini	183.00	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Oklahoma	Cimarron	Nathan Johnson	168.78	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Oklahoma	Texas	Neal Hofferber	165.24	DuPont Pioneer	86G32
3rd	Oklahoma	Texas	Mark Witt	164.12	DuPont Pioneer	86G32
1st	Texas	Dallam	Adam Caddell	136.49	DEKALB	DKS28-05
2nd	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	109.33	DEKALB	DKS53-67
3rd	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	109.04	DEKALB	DKS53-67

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
Conventional-Till Non-Irrigated						
1st	Delaware	Kent	Frank G. Hrupsa	116.80	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Florida	Hamilton	Samantha C. Jones	75.17	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Georgia	Lee	Rodney Harrell	69.41	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	Montgomery	James Alexander	162.60	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Indiana	Knox	Carter and Sons Farms LLC	124.59	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Kansas	Cherokee	David Justice	170.23	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Kansas	Saline	Keith Short	158.74	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
3rd	Kansas	Saline	Justin Short	158.43	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	Kentucky	McLean	Phillip W. Logsdon	169.88	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Maryland	Charles	Jack Welch	103.31	Seed Consultants	SCSG 363
1st	Minnesota	Stearns	Joe Krippner	145.15	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Missouri	Livingston	HRB Farming Partnership	169.01	DEKALB	DKS53-67
2nd	Missouri	Livingston	Dave & Matt Hughes - Hughes Cattle Co.	142.29	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Nebraska	Pawnee	Matthew J. Bloss	146.16	DEKALB	DKS53-67
2nd	Nebraska	Nance	Lynn Belitz	137.59	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Santino Santini, Jr.	188.73	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
2nd	New Jersey	Warren	Chris Santini	184.83	DEKALB	DKS37-07
3rd	New Jersey	Warren	Robert Santini, Sr.	177.14	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	North Carolina	Chowan	Sydney P. Copeland	176.53	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	North Carolina	Perquimans	Wallace Ownley Farms	172.48	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	150.37	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Texas	Fischer & Fischer	122.30	DuPont Pioneer	85Y34
2nd	Oklahoma	Ottawa	Sue Rendel	109.38	DuPont Pioneer	85P05
3rd	Oklahoma	Ottawa	Zack Rendel	106.59	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	Pennsylvania	Adams	Howard Deshong	165.15	DuPont Pioneer	86G08
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Dave Knoll	168.21	DuPont Pioneer	88Y41
2nd	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Tom Biddle	161.70	DuPont Pioneer	8925
1st	Texas	Cameron	Steve Bauer	137.65	DEKALB	DKS53-67
2nd	Texas	Nueces	Legacy Farms	129.86	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Texas	Hockley	Double P Farms	118.66	DuPont Pioneer	85P05
1st	Virginia	King William	Edwin A. Mills	106.41	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	West Virginia	Hardy	Louis Miltenberger	83.90	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Wisconsin	Calumet	Robert R. Danes	148.62	DEKALB	DKS 28E

Conventional-Till Irrigated

1st	Arkansas	Clay	EDL Farms	150.01	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Arkansas	Clay	Jerry Turner	143.36	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Arkansas	Cross	Adam Fisher	142.98	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Thomas Taylor	101.88	DuPont Pioneer	83P17
1st	Idaho	Canyon	Jim Boehlke - Bell-Key Farms	237.93	DuPont Pioneer	85Y40
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	Hugh David Scates	150.61	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Wichita	Galen Bering	192.82	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
2nd	Kansas	Kiowa	Matt Ballard	176.84	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Missouri	Pemiscot	Chris Mehrie	151.32	DuPont Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Missouri	Stoddard	Dylan Perkins	143.13	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Scott Jewett	194.81	DuPont Pioneer	84P72
2nd	Nebraska	Clay	RWJ Farms, Inc.	176.97	DuPont Pioneer	84G62
1st	Oklahoma	Custer	Nathan Miller	136.39	DuPont Pioneer	85P05



Sorghum Update

Brought to you by the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

Best Management Practices for Top Yields in Sorghum

Midwest grain sorghum producers currently face challenges for sustaining and achieving high yield potential and closing yield gaps. Yield gaps are the difference between maximum attainable yield and current on-farm yield. Maximum yield can be achieved through selection of most suitable hybrids and crop management practices for specific soil and weather. This project examines several management factors to understand their influence on increasing sorghum yields.

Methods

The hybrid used for 2014 was Sorghum Partners NK7633. For 2015 season, the best-suited hybrid was selected for each each location. A total of 11 treatment combinations were implemented in all four irrigated and four non-irrigated sites, during 2014 and 2015 growing seasons. Some of the crop management factors evaluated were seeding rate, row spacing, nitrogen, fungicide/insecticide, and micronutrient applications (Table 1).

Table 1. Treatment Descriptions

	Treatments										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
High Seeding Rate (80,000 pl ac ⁻¹)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Narrow Row Spacing (15 in vs. 30 in)	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X
GreenSeeker II Program	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Fungicide/Insecticide	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Micronutrients (Fe/Zn)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Plant Growth Regulator	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Starter Fertilizer (MPCS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Chloride	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Non-irrigated (Grain Declared + 50 lbs N)											X

Treatments: 1= High Input (HI); 2= Plant Density (PD) 80,000 vs. 40,000 pl ac⁻¹; 3= Row Spacing (RS); 4= Pre-plant nitrogen only (Pre-N); 5= Fungicide/Insecticide (FI); 6= Micronutrients (Micro); 7= Plant Growth Regulator (PGR); 8= Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) (NP); 9= Chloride (Cl); 10= Standard Practice (SP); 11= High Input plus extra 50 lbs N acre⁻¹ (HI+N).

Several soil and plant measurements were collected throughout the season including soil samples, stand counts, biomass for nutrient analysis, seasonal weather and plant data, and final grain yield information.

Results

For 2014, sorghum yields were highly variable across all the sites due to drought and heat conditions by location. The lowest yielding site (Ottawa) experienced severe drought stress during flow-

ering. For 2015, yields were less variable and higher average yields were documented. As a general rule, under low-yielding sites (< 90 bu/acre), crop production practices did not have any effect on increasing yields. However, under superior yields (>120 bu/acre), narrowing rows plus balanced nutrition were critical.

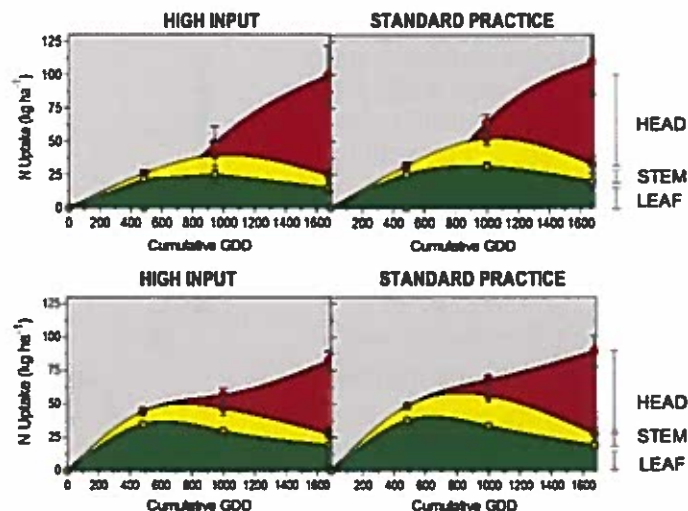
Table 2. Average yields for all sites and years.

Site	Mean Yield	Min. Yield	Max. Yield	Coefficient of Variation
2014	- bushels per acre-			%
Scandia	109	82	139	13.7
Rossville	129	101	151	8.3
Ottawa	68	38	99	23.8
Hutchinson	79	48	100	15.9
2015				
Scandia	121	65	155	17.6
Topeka	153	130	173	5.8
Ottawa	88	67	109	9.9
Manhattan	105	75	151	13.5

Conclusions

Over both years and all sites, the standard practice (SP) treatment was generally out-yielded by the High Input (HI) approach, though it was not always statistically significant. During drought-stress conditions, the SP treatment yielded comparable as the HI approach. Under irrigation, yield variability was reduced, and more nutrients were accumulated in the grain portion at harvest time (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Nitrogen uptake at Rossville (top) and Ottawa (bottom).



Profit Opportunity May Present Itself. Take it.

By John Duff

The sorghum industry experienced a transformational year in 2015. At 594 million bushels, the 2015 crop was the largest since 1999, and sorghum producers harvested a record yield of 77.7 bushels per acre.

While a near-perfect growing season and producers with a keen interest in constant improvement take much of the credit for the size of the crop, markets also played a key role.

Basis levels affording premiums to corn throughout the Sorghum Belt were instrumental in securing the largest planted acreage for sorghum since 2003.

But basis is only part of the equation—particularly for producers planning on growing sorghum anyway. For those producers, the overall outlook for the grain complex is just as important. So where is the grain complex headed?

“I think if it was just up to the corn market, the bottom is probably in already,” said Arlan Suderman, chief commodities economist for INTL FCStone Financial Inc.’s FCM division.

The corn market isn’t the only factor, though, and producers must

► NOVEMBER marked the eighty-sixth consecutive month the Federal Reserve held its benchmark interest rate, the federal funds rate, below 1 percent. Source: Federal Reserve

track monetary policy shifts as closely as anyone on Wall Street.

“If the Federal Reserve continues to be hawkish after the rate hike and leads the markets to believe we’re going to have another hike this winter, we could see the dollar move back to new highs and the funds sell off the major commodity indices,” cautions Suderman. “That would mean selling corn contracts, as well. So there is that risk we could slip to new lows.”

If the bottom is in, what is the upside potential? Suderman contends it hinges on weather.

“As we move forward into the spring and we have the conclusion of El Niño and a transition toward a La Niña cycle this summer,” Suderman said, “there will be those that want to put some risk premium back into the market. Based on

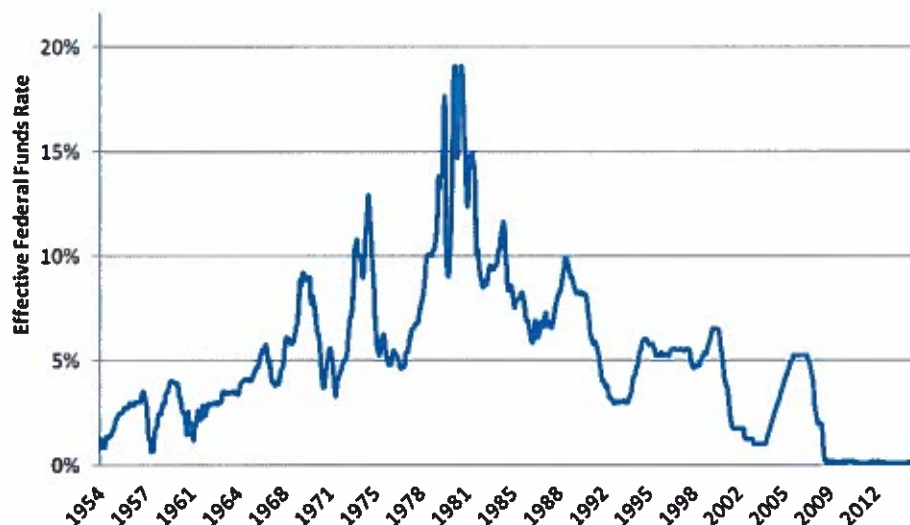
this, we could move to the \$4.00-\$4.10 area.”

“To get above that, we need to see the climatologists gain confidence that the changing ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation, or the phenomenon that influences global atmospheric circulation and causes El Niño and La Niña cycles) is going to give us a warm, dry Midwest,” he said.

“If that is the case, we could go well above \$5.00 depending on the extent of the adverse weather.”

Producers shouldn’t hold out for this at all costs, and Suderman stresses caution and realism when assessing upside price potential.

“There are those already calling for \$5.00, but it comes down to the factors you want to include in seeking your analog years,” Suderman said. “It’s possible to get a group of



analog years to say what you want them to say. There are transitional years that are hot and dry like 1983 and 1988, and there are transitional years that are wet. Right now it's probably 50-50, but we'll know a lot more in the next couple months."

Still, producers can't neglect basis, even if Federal Reserve fireworks and weather patterns are more fun to track.

Basis for new crop sorghum soared to all-time highs early in 2015 as a result of Chinese demand, and with more than half of USDA's sorghum export target for the current marketing year already on the books, basis could certainly run wild again.

"If a surge in demand from end-users or China really pushes basis, producers need to be willing to accept good basis when offered," Suderman said.

Whether that's simply locking in a flat price or using a basis contract, Suderman stresses quick action—especially if Chinese demand begins to cool.

Randy Allen, founder and CEO of RWA Financial Services Inc., concurs, particularly with the current neutral-to-bearish state of many indicators.

"It's disappointing when producers leave chances at profit on the table," Allen said. "Producers need to use the financial tools available to take advantage of good pricing opportunities and not worry about how high the market might go."

"The bigger worry is how low it can go," he said. "Your enemy is lower prices in marketing, so you need to be concentrating on what is likely to happen instead of speculating around low-probability scenarios."

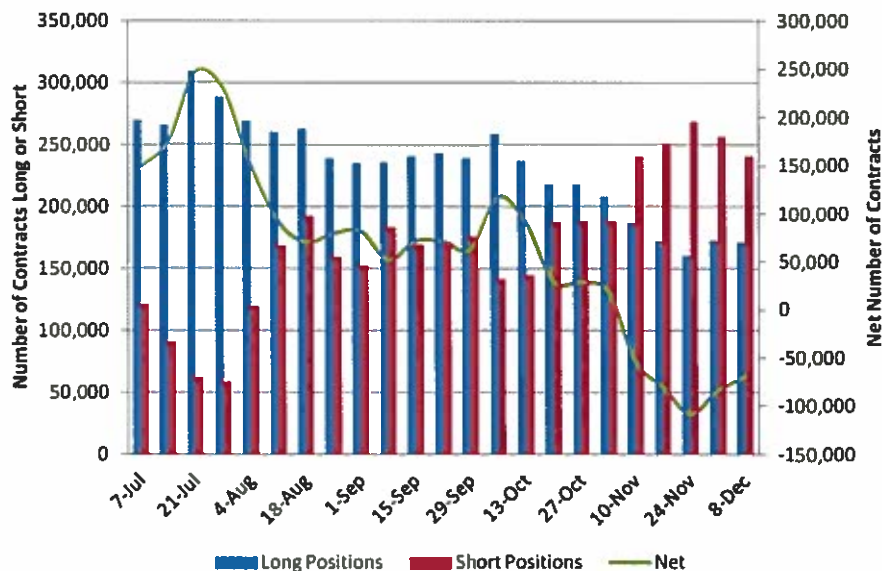
"For example, instead of sitting on grain waiting for higher prices, a

producer could liquidate his cash position then buy the bushels back using futures," Allen said. "This way the grain can't go out of condition, and it doesn't rack up storage or interest charges and the producer can still participate in a rally."

Fund action in the corn market is a key indicator Allen advises producers to watch closely, especially right now.

"Money moves markets," Allen said. "The managed fund money agriculture gets isn't much compared to precious metals or crude oil, but it's big to the corn market."

"The funds are short a significant amount of corn contracts, so there isn't much support for a rally in that respect," he said. "You can try to rally, but you can't push it because of the short fund positions. How can you have a rally when fund action continues to work against you and force the market down?"



▲ AS OF EARLY DECEMBER, managed fund short corn positions outnumbered managed fund long corn positions by almost 70,000 contracts. Source: Commodity Futures Trading Commission

Allen contends production hiccups in South America could trigger a move back upward, but short of that, continued sideways action is a good possibility.

What about demand for grain from ethanol plants here at home?

"The recent RVO rule was surprisingly good for ethanol," Suderman said. "However, the Blend Wall is still an issue, so production will not necessarily increase accordingly."

This doesn't mean ethanol won't contribute any upward price pressure to the grain complex.

"With the Blend Wall a factor, we have to depend more on ethanol exports," Suderman said. "Ethanol exports have been steadily better than anticipated overall."

"The bottom line is baseline exports will hold ethanol demand up and help maintain production," he said. "We'll likely increase the amount of grain that goes into ethanol over the next year by a few percentage points—just probably not dramatically."

Like many others, Suderman believes USDA is underestimating ethanol production, meaning grain


demand from the sector in official estimates is likely lower than reality.

Underestimated grain demand is certainly supportive of the corn market. For the much smaller sorghum market, the current underestimation of demand from sorghum ethanol plants, 20 million bushels or approximately 3.4 percent of the crop, could have meaningful impacts on basis.

So, where is the grain complex headed? Regardless of market movements over

the next year, Allen maintains the best approach is a logical plan executed with discipline.

"It all comes down to price targets, discipline and the volume you feel comfortable moving," he said. "End of story." ▮



AG1401
Medium-Early
White

AG1201
Earliest Bronze

AG1203
Early Bronze

AG2103
Medium Red

AG2115
Medium Red

AG3101
Medium-Late Red

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Sorghum Checkoff Board Invests \$6.198 Million in Industry

In an effort to further sorghum growers' productivity and demand, the Sorghum Checkoff board of directors invested \$6.198 million, the largest investment made by the board since its establishment, to fund targeted proposals. The commitment was approved during the Dec. 9 board meeting.

The Sorghum Checkoff board, external committee members and staff dedicated the past several months to reviewing proposals in a two-part process within crop improvement, high value markets and renewables. A total of 114 pre-proposals were received and 37 full proposals were requested.

"This culminates the board's efforts in requesting, reviewing and establishing funding for projects intended to assist the sorghum industry and more importantly, the sorghum farmer," said Sorghum Checkoff Executive Director Florentino Lopez.

Lopez said the board continues to emphasize its commitment to funding projects that will support increases in field-level productivity as well as market-level demand and value enhancements, which continue to be seen as a valuable means of increasing opportunities for farmer profitability.

The board of directors made a final decision on 30 projects through the RFP process to address key priorities for the sorghum industry.

The diverse project portfolio will focus on items such as over-the-top grass herbicide, exploring the opportunity for maximizing sorghum grain prebiotics production, sorghum's use in multiple international marketplaces and many more.

Funding of these projects is contingent upon approval from USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

"I feel like the Sorghum Checkoff board and staff do a great job allocating sorghum producers' checkoff dollars," said Sorghum Checkoff Chairman David Fremark. "Checkoff dollars give farmers the ability to actively remain engaged in research, promotion and education that will benefit producers and the sorghum industry in the future. We are excited about the opportunity presented by these efforts."



Leaving a Legacy

Relecting on the past seven years of the sorghum industry, a lot has changed – in a good way. For three of the last founding Sorghum Checkoff board directors, they’ve had a front-row seat in the evolution of the industry, playing an integral role in its successes.

As their years of commitment to the Sorghum Checkoff board come to a close, Bill Greving of Prairie View, Kansas, Bill Kubecka of Palacios, Texas, and Greg Shelor of Minneola, Kansas, agree this was an experience of a lifetime, especially having the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of farmers across the nation.

“I guess when you do things not for yourself, but for others,” Greving said, “and people recognize that and compliment you for it, there isn’t any money that could make up for it.”

These retiring board members have overseen millions of dollars in research, experienced booms in the export, livestock and high value markets, and put producer dollars to good use. Shelor said it is gratifying to see the industry grow through the efforts of the checkoff.

“It was a vision we had early on when the industry was on a decline,” Shelor said. “Now it has turned around in a greater extent not only from producers but the industry as a whole, and it is satisfying to see that.”

The outgoing board members have been on the front line of many wins for the sorghum industry, but perhaps, Kubecka said the most important win is the commitment the board made to working for the good of the producer.

“I think everyone on the board has really embraced the idea of making sorghum producers more profitable while making sorghum a more viable commodity for all of us, including end-users,” Kubecka said. “I am anxious to see the hard work continue to benefit producers across the country.”

When the checkoff began, Shelor said the industry needed an additional voice to share sorghum’s viability as a crop. Expansion and improvements have changed the landscape, but he said there is still work to be done.



2

“The sorghum industry has improved a lot, but we still have a ways to go,” Shelor said.

In order to continue sorghum’s momentum, the outgoing board directors said it will be vital to reflect on past efforts, continue education and awareness efforts, and most importantly, work towards increasing producer profitability.

“Get on this board because you want to make a positive change in farmers’ fields and farmers’ pocket books,” Greving said.

Although it has been rewarding to see the many exciting moments for sorghum, Kubecka said it is the relationships with producers across the country, staff and others that will stay with him for a lifetime.

“The people I have met and became good friends with is the most rewarding experience from a personal standpoint,” Kubecka said.

Time dedicated to the sorghum industry is something Greving, Kubecka and Shelor said is an adventure they have truly valued and look forward to what the future has in store for sorghum.

“If you were to write me a check for a million dollars or let me relive our last meeting,” Greving said, “I would tell you to keep your million dollars. I wouldn’t need it, because I’d rather always remember that last meeting where my peers spoke highly of our leadership and accomplishments.” ✓

We Want YOU for Leadership Sorghum Class III

From the Texas Gulf Coast to the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., Leadership Sorghum is seeking to develop the next generation of leaders for the sorghum industry.

3

After a year of learning about sorghum across the country, Leadership Sorghum Class II came to a close at the Sorghum Checkoff Board Meeting in Lubbock, Texas, December 8-9. It is now time to begin recruiting for Leadership Sorghum Class III.

Jessie Wyrill of Kirwin, Kansas, and graduate of Leadership Sorghum Class II, said Leadership Sorghum is an invaluable experience to any sorghum producer and their operation.

"If you grow sorghum you should know every part of the business," Wyrill said, "This program will show you from the breeding all the way to getting it to another country. It is a very exciting process to learn everything."

Through a series of hands-on and classroom-style education, participants will gain an understanding of how sorghum moves through the value chain, how checkoffs and interest organizations interact on behalf of the industry and what the future holds for the crop. In addition, the program provides professional development training and networking opportunities.

Members of Leadership Sorghum Class III will be given the opportunity to get an up-close look at the sorghum industry including seed production and basic and applied research in the Texas High Plains, public research and domestic markets in Kansas, the government's role in sorghum, checkoffs and stakeholder groups in Washington D.C. as well as port operations, international marketing and next generation biofuels in the Texas Gulf.

Past members have walked away with a newfound appreciation and knowledge that has proven valuable in a multitude of ways, and Kent Martin of Carmen, Oklahoma, and Leadership Sorghum Class II graduate, said programs like this are key to building new leadership.

"I think that as farmers we need to be more engaged in our production, informing the public and in leadership," Martin said, "I think that this type of a program is essential to building more understanding, more leadership and as farmers doing a better job of promoting our business to the public."

Whether it is media training or being in a legislative setting, Craig Poore of Alton, Kansas, and Leadership Sorghum Class II graduate, said this program helps farmers with future involvement.

"This class prepares you to step up and do something in your community, and at the state and national levels," Poore said.

Any farmer actively engaged in sorghum production is encouraged to apply. Applications will be available from the Sorghum Checkoff at LeadSorghum.com January 4-April 25, 2016. The interview process will begin in May and new class members will be announced June 30, 2016. For more information regarding Leadership Sorghum, visit the Sorghum Checkoff website.

"My experience in the leadership program has been great, life changing almost," said Lee Whitaker, sorghum grower from Claude, Texas, and Leadership Sorghum Class II graduate. "The new friends, the new contacts, this whole program has been eye opening, and I would really recommend it to others." ✓

leadership SORGHUM

Class III Schedule

September 2016 - Texas Panhandle

Introduction, seed industry overview, basic and applied research

November 2016 - Kansas

Public research and domestic markets

February 2017 - Washington, D.C.

Government's role in sorghum, checkoffs and interest organizations

August 2017 - Texas Gulf Coast

Port operations, international marketing, next generations biofuels

December 2017 - Sorghum Checkoff Board Meeting

Board operations, program graduation

Sorghum Checkoff Staff Team Evolves

The Sorghum Checkoff is excited to announce new promotions and hires in the communications and high value markets departments.

Faith Jurek, who has worked as the Sorghum Checkoff communications director for nearly two years, has been promoted to consumer communications strategist. Jurek will lead consumer-facing communications efforts as they relate to the human and pet food sectors of the sorghum industry.

Kelli Fulkerson has served as the National Sorghum Producers communications director for the last year and recently took on the position as Sorghum Checkoff marketing coordinator under the high value markets program. In this post, Fulkerson is chartered with all marketing responsibilities and guiding communication and advertising content strategies. Fulkerson grew up on a farm and ranch in Michigan, is a former state FFA officer, and is a graduate of South Dakota State University with dual degrees in animal science and agricultural communications and a minor in marketing.

Sorghum Checkoff Board Directors Sworn In, Officers Elected

Three Sorghum Checkoff board directors were sworn in during the December board meeting in Lubbock, Texas.

David Fremark of St. Lawrence, South Dakota, returns to the board as an at-large member. New to the board are Craig Poore of Alton, Kansas and Jim Massey IV of Robstown, Texas. Boyd Funk of Garden City, Kansas, will be sworn in during the next Sorghum Checkoff board meeting.

David Fremark was elected chairman, Dan Krienke of Perryton, Texas, as vice chairman, Adam Baldwin

The Sorghum Checkoff is also excited to welcome a new team member to the communications department. Michelle Hochstein of Nazareth, Texas, began in January 2016 as the Sorghum Checkoff communications manager, focusing on crop improvement, agronomy and renewables programs. Hochstein graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications in December 2015. During her last semester, Hochstein served as editor of the TTU Department of Agricultural Education and Communications departmental magazine *The Agriculturist*. She has completed multiple communications internships, including with the Sorghum Checkoff and Texas Farm Bureau, which make her a valuable asset to the organization.

"Team Sorghum is excited to welcome these talented individuals to the industry," said Sorghum Checkoff CEO Tim Lust. "With their unique talents, each of these individuals will be an asset to the organization, which will help us in increasing producer profitability." ✓

of McPherson, Kansas, as secretary and Verity Ulibarri of McAlister, New Mexico, as treasurer.

"These are exciting times for sorghum, with a national yield record, expanded exports, among many other industry highlights," Fremark said. "Going forward, our board will be looking to expand markets and increase grower productivity, while sticking to our mission of enhancing profitable opportunities for U.S. sorghum growers." ✓

Sorghum Industry Events

January 21 — Nebraska Sorghum Symposium
Grand Island, Nebraska

January 26-27 — No Till on the Plains
Salina, Kansas

February 26-27 — Mid-South Farm & Ranch Show
Memphis, Tennessee

March 1-5 — Commodity Classic
New Orleans, Louisiana

For more events, visit sorghumcheckoff.com/calendar

SORGHUM CHECKOFF MISSION:

USCP commits to efficiently invest checkoff dollars to increase producer profitability and enhance the sorghum industry.

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STANDING AGAINST THE PEST

When Dale Artho walked out of his sorghum field with his pants covered in little bugs, he immediately knew what the problem was. Sugarcane aphids.

The sugarcane aphid is a relatively new pest to the U.S. sorghum industry, discovered late in the 2013 growing season in the coastal sorghum regions of Texas and Louisiana. However, the aphid is no stranger to sorghum.

“Some people are saying it is a new invasive pest that has appeared out of nowhere, but we have been working with it in African countries for 30 years or more, and the scientists there rely on plant resistance and beneficial insects to control it,” said Bonnie Pendleton, Ph.D., professor of integrated pest management entomology at West Texas A&M University. “It just hit the U.S. with unexpected force.”

Because of existing aphid research and previous experience with the greenbug, Pendleton said seed companies have quickly developed sorghum hybrids that show tolerance to the sugarcane aphid, which can often take up to 10 years of research to produce.

Sugarcane aphids become adults in about five days, reproducing at a rate of 1-3 offspring a day for 28 days, which means you can go from having no problem to a serious one in a matter of days. Timing is key in order to combat the pest.

It is recommended to scout fields at least once a week for signs of the aphid. Sugarcane aphids excrete honeydew, a sticky, shiny substance on the lower leaves, which is often the first sign of a sugarcane aphid infestation. Once aphids are found, fields should be scouted 2-3 times a week.

Loss of plant sap, caused by the sugarcane aphids feeding on sorghum leaves, takes away nutrients from the plant that would otherwise be utilized for plant health and grain yield. Sugarcane aphid feeding, along with black sooty mold and other secondary diseases, eventually cause the leaves to turn yellow and die. The result is often uneven or lack of head emergence, poor grain set, and possibly an increase in lodging. A yield loss of up to 100 percent is possible if high aphid infestation levels occur prior to heading and are left untreated.

Depending on the growing region and the growth stage, growers are encouraged to treat for aphids as soon as the action threshold is reached. A general guideline recommended by Sorghum Checkoff Agronomist Brent Bean, Ph.D., is to apply an insecticide when 25 percent of the plants have been infested with 50 aphids per leaf, but Bean pointed out there are specific threshold levels suggested for different growing stages and geographical regions so local experts should be consulted.

For example, in the Delta and mid-south regions, at the pre-boot and boot stages, growers are advised to take action when 20 percent of the plants are infested with localized areas of heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies.

At the heading, soft dough and dough stages, the advised threshold is when 30 percent of plants are infested with heavy honeydew and aphid colonies. When the grain black layer growth stage is reached, it is suggested to spray when honeydew presence is heavy and there

are established aphid colonies in the head. At this point, treatment should occur only to prevent harvest problems.

However, regardless of the threshold level used, it is critical that insecticide application occurs as soon as possible to avoid a severe loss. Applications targeting lower infestation levels are likely to be more effective and prevent an escalating population of aphids that will be much more difficult to control.

“As most things in agriculture are, our window of opportunity is usually pretty small and we want to stay within that and not go over that threshold because then you start to get into damage,” said Artho, who grows sorghum near Amarillo, Texas.

Last year there were two insecticide options most often recommended to control the sugarcane aphid. Sivanto, flupyradifurone, was sold by Bayer CropScience, and Transform, sulfoxaflor, was sold by Dow AgroSciences. Both of these insecticides proved to be effective. Sivanto has a federal label for use in sorghum, and Transform was available by state under a Section 18 exemption in 2015. To be used in 2016, states will need to reapply for the Section 18 exemption and gain approval from the U.S.

“As with all other crop pest crises, the sugarcane aphid will be effectively dealt with by using sound integrated pest management practices.”



By Michelle Hochstein

Environmental Protection Agency.

"It is going to be very important to get more products in the market place for growers to rotate chemistries," said Angus Catchot, Ph.D., extension professor in entomology at Mississippi State University. "As long as we have multiple products to control the pests and avoid insecticide resistance, we can absolutely grow the crop without any fear of loss."

Not long after discovering the aphids in his field, Artho said he took advice from his crop consultant and decided to spray his field with Transform, noting that the volume of water was important. He opted for an aerial application with a five gallon per acre rate of water.

"We got by with one spray," he said. "I was tickled. We had beneficial insects rebuild after the application, and we didn't have any issues after that."

Though not every grower had the same experience treating the aphids, Artho said he credits his success to the experiences of sorghum growers in the coastal regions as he was able to leverage knowledge from them.

"When we get new pests, we tend to panic until we have had experience with them," Artho said. "Then we learn how to manage around those issues, but it does take management and it takes patience to learn what the cycle is."

According to David Gunter, an extension feed grain specialist at Clemson University, it is important for growers to get ahead of the aphid. He suggests getting good coverage when spraying, driving it into the canopies.

"A lot of people think this aphid is the demise of sorghum. I don't think so," Gunter said. "We have problems in every crop, and we'll figure this one out, too. With a little help from Mother Nature, we will be fine."

As long as sorghum growers scout regularly and treat for aphids in a timely manner, Catchot said yields can be completely protected.

"We are going to get through this. We are already getting through it," he said. "From this point forward, we know what we are dealing with. We know it is very

manageable. We just need to stay the course, be diligent and when the pests enter that threshold, be timely and make applications."

Luke Sayes, who grows grain sorghum in Vick, Louisiana, first encountered the aphid just before harvesting in 2013. He said he has been scouting regularly each season since, which has resulted in early detection of the aphids with no loss in yields. In 2015, he planted pre-treated seed and later applied Sivanto shortly after discovering aphids during the flag leaf stage.

"Scouting regularly is the key to getting ahead of them," Sayes said. "As long as you can stay out there and scout two or three times a week you should be fine. They are fairly easy to handle."

North Carolina sorghum grower Peter Fleming learned the hard way, as did many other growers this season. He discovered infestations late and was not able to treat for aphids soon after detection due to persistent rainfall, resulting in a significant yield loss. Even so, he said he is aware now and is confident he will be able to manage them next year.

"This year we got blindsided by them, but I hope the sugarcane aphids don't deter people from wanting to put the

crop out," Fleming said. "You don't need to worry so much about them as long as you take care of your sorghum crop the way you do your corn crop, your tobacco crop or your wheat crop."

Catchot said he believes host plant resistance will be the key to stopping the aphid.

"Things we have seen in the past with green bugs and other aphid pests as well as things I have seen in some breeding programs suggest there is definitely germplasm that exists," Catchot said. "It may be a ways away, but say 3-5 years down the road, we will potentially have germplasm that will be resistant or at least very tolerant."

Pendleton, who has been working on evaluating sorghum seedlings for resistance to sugarcane aphids in



her greenhouse in Canyon, Texas, said she urges farmers not to be afraid of the aphid, just aware. There is biological control through beneficial insects, and she as well as other researchers are working fast to develop sorghum varieties with resistance against the aphid.

“Sorghum has always had aphids, and in some ways the sugarcane aphid causes extreme problems, but it doesn’t inject toxin into plants, which is not as damaging, perhaps, as green bug, and we’ve been fighting green bug for years,” Pendleton said. “I am very pleased with the resistance that is available that will quickly be available commercially everywhere.”

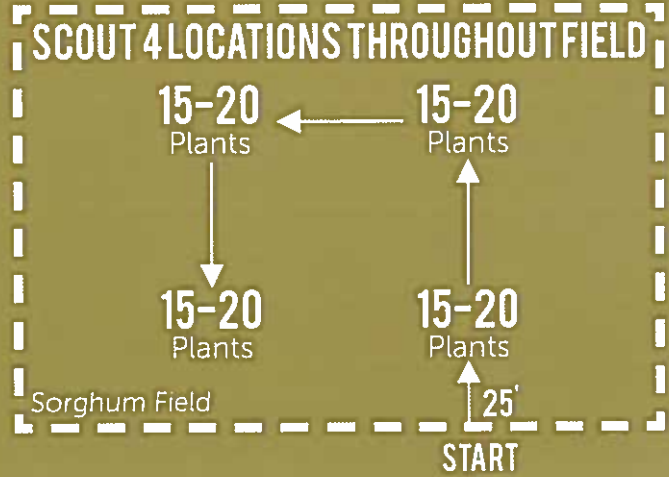
For those sorghum growers who experienced the sugarcane aphid for the first time in 2015, and maybe had to spray two or three times, it is easy to get discouraged. However, Bean said growers everywhere should be encouraged by the experience of those in South Texas and in Louisiana who have the most experience with this pest and continue to successfully grow grain sorghum.

“This is a strong indication that growers are learning to effectively and economically manage the sugarcane aphid,” Bean said. “As with all other crop pest crises, the sugarcane aphid will be effectively dealt with by using sound integrated pest management practices.”



▶ SCOUTING FOR THE APHID is extremely important and should be done once a week. Once found, begin scouting at least twice a week. Look for honeydew on lower leaves. Note presence and number of aphids per leaf, and collect a leaf from the bottom and top of 20 plants to determine needed insecticide treatment.

◀ LEARN how to scout, identify and treat sugarcane aphids at sorghumcheckoff.com/pest-management/.



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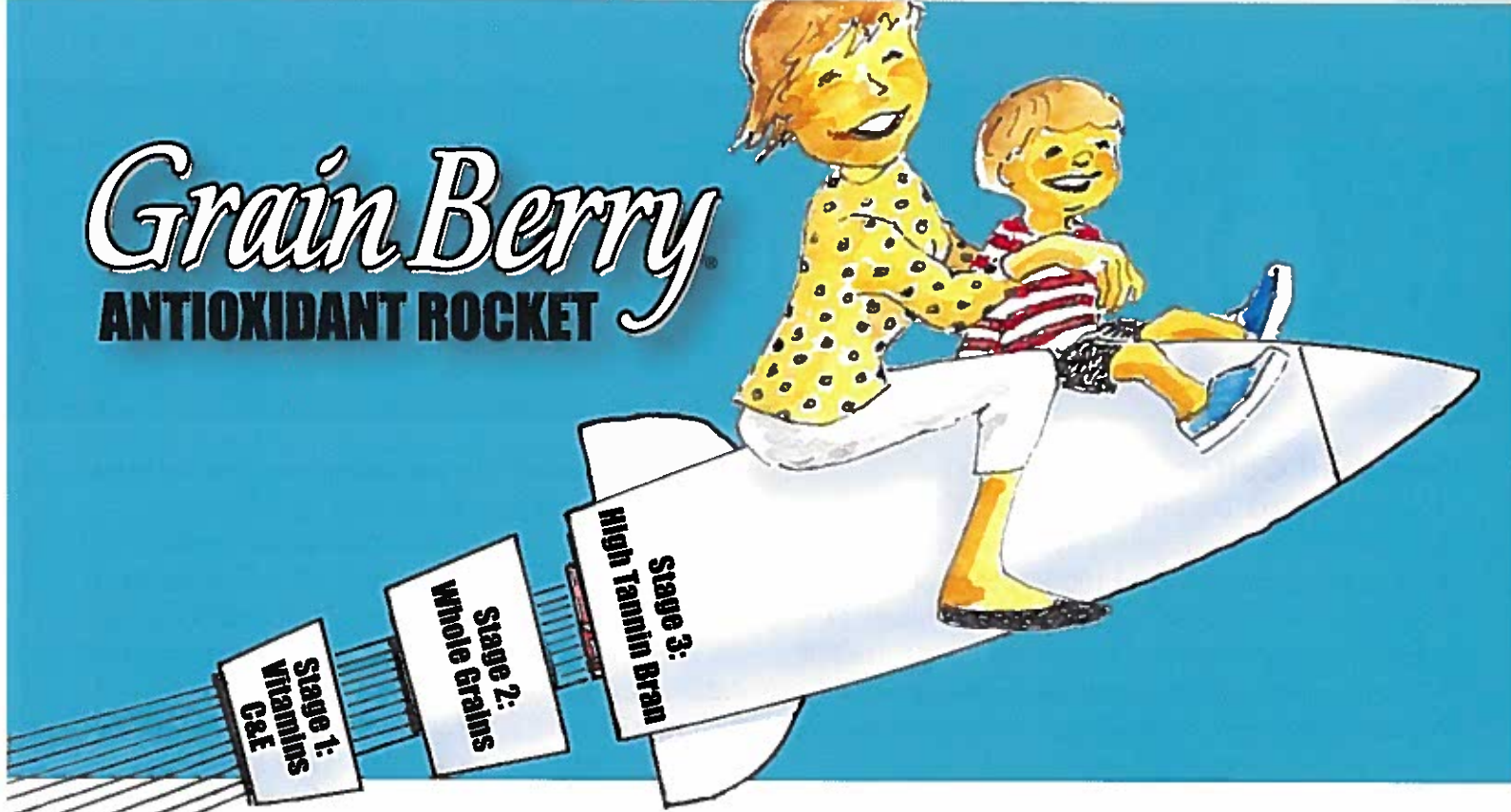
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Sorghum Shortcuts

National Cotton Council Seeks Cottonseed Designation as Oilseed

In mid-December, struggling American cotton farmers received the backing of 100 Members of Congress urging U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to use legal authority provided under the 2014 Farm Bill. U.S. cotton farmers are seeking assistance by requesting the designation of cottonseed as an oilseed to have access to the risk management programs Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) under Title I of the farm bill.

The American Sugar Alliance, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Farmers Union and American Soybean Association have also rallied behind the National Cotton Council's request, sending a letter to Secretary Vilsack, but it is still uncertain whether these efforts will offer enough persuasion for USDA officials to change their mind.

National Sorghum Producers has worked with lawmakers to ensure the program remains decoupled to avoid distorting planting decisions while also helping growers in need. ♪

Auction Items Needed for 2016 Sorghum PAC Event

Sorghum PAC, the political action committee of the National Sorghum Producers, will be conducting its annual fundraising event at the 2016 Commodity Classic in New Orleans. The Sorghum PAC Reception & Auction will be held on Friday, March 4, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Participation is restricted to NSP members, staff, industry partners and state sorghum organizations affiliated with NSP and their family members.



The Sorghum PAC is requesting donations of items for both the silent and live auctions. Silent auction items will be up for bid online prior to the event (watch for details). For ideas about top-selling items, more information, or to become a NSP member so you can attend the event, please contact Shelley Heinrich at shelleyh@sorghumgrowers.com.

Tickets for the Sorghum PAC Reception & Auction will be available for purchase the night of the event and at the Sorghum General Session. Stay tuned for additional details! The Sorghum PAC Casino Night will resume at the 2017 Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas. ♪

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