NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS

SORGHUM Grower

WINTER 2017

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PLUS:

FINDING A SWEET REWARD IN SORGHUM SILAGE

YIELD CONTEST RESULTS

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS

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CEO's Desk

Tim's Awesome Note

A surplus of motivating words from Tim to his readers.

Tim Lust
NSP Chief Executive Officer

What the Annual Forage Program Means For You

By Kayla M. Wilkins

Farmers plant up to four million acres of forage sorghum annually, yet the historic absence of an insurance program for those acres puts growers at a disadvantage. The National Sorghum Producers is leading the charge to address the need for an insurance program conducive for forage sorghum growers.

"Forage is a very significant part of the sorghum industry and traditionally forage growers have been very underrepresented when it comes to risk management tools," John Duff, NSP strategic business director, said.

A Pilot Program

In 2014, a pilot program was implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota to provide the option of Annual Forage policies to producers in those states. The following year the program was extended into Colorado and now into New Mexico. The Annual Forage program provides producers a tool to protect profits and provide incentives for growers to continue dedicating acreage to annual forages. For the first time, annual forage producers have an insurance policy specifically tailored to them.

NSP worked closely over the implementation phase of Annual Forage with AgForce to extend the program across the Sorghum Belt. AgForce is a private consulting company that provides aid in developing and expanding government risk management programs.

"It was a successful grassroots effort led by NSP in partnership with other state organizations and AgForce to give growers an option for annual winter and summer forage crops," Duff said.

▶ ANNUAL FORAGE RAINFALL GRIDS are 25 x 25 degrees. The total rainfall for each grid serves as the total rainfall for fields insured inside the grid. These grids go across state and county lines, and producers have preference when fields cross grid boundaries.

Providing Options

With traditional multi-peril crop insurance, many producers in the drier parts of the Sorghum Belt are left with marginal coverage as a result of their actual production history (APH) declining due to lack of rainfall. In some areas, producers have experienced such a decrease in their APH, they have $70 per acre or more of exposed risk.

In contrast, Annual Forage guarantees are solely based on rainfall so the program aids those producers specifically. Annual Forage is a single-peril program with the sole condition being rainfall. Coverage is based upon rainfall received in relation to the long-term average. The average is taken from each area in the rainfall grid spanning approximately 17 by 14 miles.

Rainfall averages are divided into two-month intervals for the year for each grid. In short, if a farm's

ANNUAL FORAGE RAINFALL GRID

Jan.-Feb.	Feb.-March	March-April
April-May	May-June	June-July
July-Aug.	Aug.-Sept.	Sept.-Oct.
Oct.-Nov.	Nov.-Dec.	

* Coverage for the year is divided and assigned to two month intervals.

* Coverage cannot be assigned to consecutive intervals.

grid receives rainfall below the chosen coverage level during an interval, the producer receives an indemnity. Annual Forage insurance is divided into two seasons. Season one spans from September to March, and the deadline to purchase coverage for that season is July 15 before planting. For spring-seeded crops in season two, March to September, producers must purchase coverage by December 15. Growers choose two-month intervals for each season. Depending on location, a producer can assign 40-50 percent of the coverage to a single two-month interval. The intervals chosen must total to 100 percent and cannot have over-lapping months of coverage. For example, a producer may not choose March-April and April-May since the April coverage overlaps.

"Annual Forage gives you the option to cover significantly more of that exposed risk once a producer's APH has lowered the guarantee on those acres," Duff said. "In some cases you may be better off with Annual Forage than a typical multi-peril policy, especially in the droughty areas common to the Sorghum Belt."

Risk Management

Duff said another exciting benefit of the Annual Forage program is a risk management tool for wheat acres grown in rotation with sorghum intended for forage. Many producers grow wheat in system with sorghum to maximize and optimize profits with minimal rainfall. By expanding the Annual Forage program, producers are not only benefitting in their forage sorghum acres but also other crops in their rotation. Annual Forage also allows coverage on double-cropping and is applicable for any crop considered an annual forage including sorghum, wheat, triticale, dryland corn, millet and others.

The Annual Forage pilot program is a great tool for producers in areas with declining water tables and minimal rain, and the program provides an additional risk management tool for all growers in the pilot area. Producers should check with their crop insurance agent to see how Annual Forage can fit into a complete risk management portfolio.

"This is good for sorghum producers, specifically," Duff said, "but it is also good for sorghum producers generally because it expands the amount of risk management options they have on all crops not just sorghum."

THE FORAGE VALUE OF SORGHUM

By Julia Debes

The cattle industry operates on a tight margin, meaning producers must provide the best nutrition possible for their herds in the most cost effective manner. Sorghum provides a solution to producers' forage quality and quantity needs both when ensiling forage sorghum as well as grazing grain sorghum stalks.

Water Efficient Silage

Growing forage sorghum for sorghum silage allows producers to efficiently meet the top resource concern in the Texas High Plains–water–according to Jordan Bell, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension agronomist.

"Water limitation is the number one driver in the transition from feeding corn silage to sorghum silage," Bell said. "Forage sorghum has very good yield potential under limited water and uses considerably less water to produce equal tonnage."

Forage sorghum characteristics can vary greatly, which is why Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension is conducting a forage sorghum silage trial at Bushland, Texas. The trial, now in its third year, is evaluating more than 100 different sorghum hybrids, including grain sorghum, forage sorghum, brown mid-rib, sorghum-sudangrass and photosensitive hybrids. The full results will be released in January, but Bell reported that the overall yields were good, ranging from 15-30 tons per acre, even after spraying twice for sugarcane aphids via aerial application.

Beyond yield, Bell emphasized the study is also examining the quality of varied sorghum types. Doing so allows researchers to match data to the differing end goals of producers. For example, producers growing forage sorghum to sell into cattle feedyards are looking for higher tonnage producing types, whereas production for dairies requires higher quality and higher digestibility.

In order to further examine quality, Bell is also evaluating ensiling duration and quality for forage sorghum as part of a second study funded by the Texas Grain Sorghum Board. Bell said the goal for this study is to determine the optimal feed value, both digestibility and carbohydrate availability, as well as evaluating differences between sorghum silage with uncracked or cracked berries.

Bell said research exists for evaluating forage sorghum quality at harvest, but the poof of data on quality during ensiling is more shallow. The ensiling trial is examining quality at 30, 60, 90 and 120 days, allowing researchers to determine the minimal time needed to ensile for maximum quality.

"Every farmer has something happen and maturity is a little different, so we wanted to examine if ensiling for different lengths of time could compensate for harvest timing without affecting quality," Bell said.

While full results are still pending, the Texas AgriLife studies are already yielding applicable results for producers. For example, Bell said researchers identified that too high of a planting population coupled with intensive fertility management could exacerbate lodging potential. As a result, researchers planted on 30 inch rows and decreased planting population to 80,000 seeds per acre from 100,000 seeds per acre. Doing so allowed researchers to push yield with increased fertility while lowering lodging potential.

Bell said researchers have also determined timing of harvest directly effects forage sorghum quality. Bell recommends an ideal harvest window at soft dough stage. If forage sorghum is harvested too late, the kernels are too hard and the feed value decreases. If forage sorghum is harvested too early, the forage sorghum a moisture content that is too high.

To build a successful forage sorghum system, Bell suggested producers adopt the same strategy as her research–match the sorghum planted to the end use goal and manage accordingly. To do so, she recommended evaluating not only sorghum type, but also individual sorghum hybrids between types to determine which is the most appropriate for the producer's operation.

Grazing Sorghum Stalks Feeds the Herd Through Early Winter

Further north into Kansas, grain sorghum stalks also provide resource and cost effective nutrition for beef producers. Justin Waggoner, Kansas State University Research and Extension beef systems specialist based in Garden City, Kansas, explained grazing grain sorghum stalks provides quality, available forage for cow-calf producers moving cattle off of summer, native grass pastures. Producers typically wean calves then put bred cows out onto grain sorghum stalks in the late fall and early winter months before moving cattle into nursing pastures.

"Milo stalks are a forage resource that has good availability that matches the nutrient needs of early bred cows," Waggoner said. "Grazing stalks fits a cow-calf operation very well."

Waggoner said sorghum stalks typically are higher quality than corn stalks and the forage value falls into a moderate-low quality base. Waggoner said average values of sorghum stalks are seven percent protein and 50 percent total digestible nutrients. According to K-State, productive sorghum fields can yield between 15,00 and 3,000 pounds of forage per acre. This combination of moderate quality and ample availability allows producers to utilize the crop residue for between 60-90 days of grazing.

"The quality of sorghum stover is comparable to dormant native grasses," Waggoner said. "Early on, with sufficient availability, producers need very minimal supplementation."

Grazing sorghum stalks does require some precautions. Sorghum will produce cyanide, in the form of prussic acid, under stress, which is toxic to cattle. As a result, Waggoner said producers do need to wait to put out cattle onto sorghum stalks until roughly a week after the first hard freeze. Doing so alleviates concerns over Prussic acid poisoning. K-State also recommends producers test sorghum stalks for nitrate levels.

With good management and a bit of common sense, sorghum can help meet producers' end use goals and address input concerns. Whether as forage ensiled for a dairy production in the Texas High Plains or grazed as residue for a cow-calf operation in Kansas, producers recognize that sorghum is the smart choice for their forage needs.

Alleviating Sugarcane Aphid Nutritional Concerns

Texas AgriLife entomologists Pat Porter, Blayne Reed and Katelyn Kowles conducted research in 2016 examining the quality of sorghum stover damaged by sugarcane aphids. Brent Bean, Sorghum Checkoff agronomist, reported the research demonstrated overall quality remained good, even at the highest plant damage rating. Bean reported total digestible nutrients decreased from 68.5 percent to 60 percent, in line with the 60 percent Texas AgriLife recommends for beef cattle in late gestation and early lactation.

Producers also raised concerns about grazing sorghum stalks with sooty mold present following sugarcane aphid infestation. Kansas State University Research and Extension confirmed this sooty mold is considered non-toxic to cattle.

Farmer CEO Series

Myles Frische

Sunray, Texas

Werner Hans Erhard, an American critical thinker and author, once said , "Create your future from your future, not your past." While family tradition is why the Frische Brothers operation started, the brothers are planning for the future. Frische Brothers farm sorghum, corn, cotton and wheat across four counties in the upper Panhandle of Texas. In addition to their row crop operation, the family also operates a cattle grow yard, fertilizer business and trucking business.

Although margins for farmers continue to decrease, Myles still believes new technology and bigger equipment has made farming more profitable and efficient. Yet, more technology and equipment does not mean farming is easier. Today's farmers just have a new set of challenges from a volatile market to overreaching regulations. However, as a successful family business, Myles and his family have expanded their personal and family vision to their operation and among their employees to create a culture where they not only work hard but also for the future.

Whether the Frisches are reviewing their farm's yearly strategic plan or meeting with all the partners to make a decision, having a plan is the key. As a commodity producer, Myles knows exactly where they stand in the markets by using a combination of strategies; including basic options positions and outright futures positions.

> "Weather, markets, health problems, accidents, in fact you name it, it can happen, but we try to always focus on our core goal, which is to hire good people and have a good market plan"

"Weather, markets, health problems, accidents, in fact you name it, it can happen, but we try to always focus on our core goal, which is to hire good people and have a good market plan," said Myles.

As the next generation continues to become more involved in the Frische Brothers operation, Myles' strategy is to let the younger generation incorporate into the operation based on their experience.

"By using this strategy, it shows their willingness to work," said Myles.

In fact, this multi-family operation has already set up a succession structure to ensure their legacy passes from one generation to the next. As the next generation is being groomed to take over the business, Myles and his brothers continue to look for beneficial opportunities to grow the operation, diversifying when they have a chance and leading by example.

"The farm will always be run by a Frische or a descendant," said Myles. "I want to be remembered as good farmers, a family man and known to be fair, not just to my employees but to my business associates as well."

As for the next generation of Frisches and other farmers, Myles recommends working hard, listening to your peers and if your neighbor has success trying something new, do not be scared to try it too.

With increasing acreage, advanced technology and complex marketing amidst volatility, today's farmers are more like CEOs. The most successful farmer CEOs dedicate their time not only to raising the crops that feed, fuel and clothe the world, but also to investing in the tools needed to maximize both agronomics and economics to boost yields and secure profits. This series examines the best practices of these top producers.

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Farmer CEO Series
Hardwick Planting Company
Newellton, Louisiana

Strategic planning is one key management component guiding Hardwick Planting Company. Jay and the executive management team develop a strategic plan for each growing season by analyzing historic production data in comparison with supply and demand signals in the commodity market.

The strategic plan also includes crop diversification to reduce risk and crop rotation to ensure sustainable production. The company captures efficiencies through annual capital improvements to both agricultural and natural resources. Each improvement initiated within the operation serves more than one purpose and factors into the overall vision of the plantation.

The sustained vision for the plantation is to preserve and enhance agricultural and natural resources present and to further ensure resources remain viable for the production of commodities and wildlife habitat for future generations. Capital improvements often include irrigation well development or constructing shallow water retention basins to collect and hold irrigation tail-water to prevent run-off.

This type of improvement also provides critical wetland habitat for many species of wildlife. Other improvements may include acquisitions of underutilized or degraded land that could be restored and enhanced for agricultural productivity and wildlife habitat.

Looking to the future, Jay will transition Mead and Marshall from partners tasked with CFO/COO and operator responsibilities to managing partners and operators. The two brothers will become the next generation of leaders at Hardwick Planting Company. Mead and Marshall will continue the tradition of managing for profitability through efficiencies.

For Jay, he and wife Mary will make lateral moves to advisor and partner roles. Further, Jay and Mary envision that Mead and Marshall will continue the pursuit of being good stewards to the land during their tenure managing Hardwick Planting Company on Somerset Plantation.

With increasing acreage, advanced technology and complex marketing amidst volatility, today's farmers are more like CEOs. The most successful farmer CEOs dedicate their time not only to raising the crops that feed, fuel and clothe the world, but also to investing in the tools needed to maximize both agronomics and economics to boost yields and secure profits. This series examines the best practices of these top producers.

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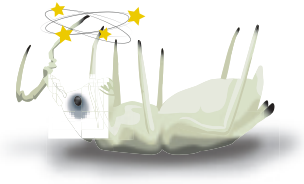

Dow AgroSciences *Solutions for the Growing World*

FINDING A SWEET REWARD IN SORGHUM SILAGE

By Shelby Maresca

Wisconsin dairies and Nebraska forage sorghum may seem like an unconventional pairing, but one Nebraska farmer is benefitting from developing that connection. Gerald Riedel, who farms near Oshkosh, Nebraska, started dedicating acres to forage sorghum three years ago. That acreage provides land for Wisconsin dairies to send their herds to develop and mature for dairy production.

New Nebraska Venture

Riedel grows a variety of crops on his 1,500 acres, including corn, dry edible beans and dryland wheat, all of which are irrigated. He added forage sorghum to his crop rotation because he saw experience the value of forage sorghum production in his family's operation in WaKeeney, Kansas. Riedel moved to Nebraska 33 years ago, to begin a new operation in Nebraska.

"Back in Kansas we had a small dairy, so I was familiar with what [the dairies] wanted to accomplish," Riedel said. "I thought they had a good idea. I am always up for a challenge, and this one looked like a good one to hit. It changed my operation around quite a bit."

Riedel started with less than a circle of irrigated cane sorghum, a type of forage sorghum. On that acreage, the cows are free to roam and graze the forage sorghum. As his partner dairies grew, Riedel's forage sorghum acreage expanded.

> "The more they need, I will be growing right along with them."

"When I started it was about a half a circle so it was small, then to a circle then two circles, I suppose it is three I have for [the dairies] this year," Riedel said.

Today, Riedel has partnerships with four Wisconsin dairies. Each has between 2,000 and 4,000 head. If there is room on Riedel's land, some Wisconsin producers will bring cattle from neighboring dairies. Riedel detailed how these dairy cattle utilize the forage sorghum.

"They bring in these calves and they put them on feed and allow them freedom as we raise them until they are about a month within cap, and they ship back to Wisconsin," Riedel said. "The lot started at about 400 and now they are up to 10,000 head, and they are looking to be up around 20,000. They need a lot of silage; those girls eat a lot of hay and silage."

Benefits of Forage Sorghum

Doug Bice, market development director for the Sorghum Checkoff, explained forage sorghum seed costs are significantly lower than other crops, particularly corn. He also said how beneficial it is to water costs and usage.

"Inputs overall are a little less, and in particular with irrigation, you are going to have sunken irrigation costs because you will not have to irrigate as much," Bice said. "That is your big resource and economic benefit, really, is able to spread that water, share that water, use that water more efficiently and effectively."

Bice detailed the benefits of using forage sorghum for dairy production.

"It has excellent palatability and strong level of proteins, which are both important in dairy rations," Bice said. "For these dairies, they have got to have forage - they cannot afford to not have that."

Forage sorghum also uses half of the water as corn, making the crop even more desirable appeal for production and financially.

"The really good thing forage sorghum has going for it is water-saving ability and usage efficiency," Bice said. "Dairies have found a good home with sorghum silage. You have forage types that produce a lot of biomass and produce a big grain head, those are going to be your hybrids that have protein and an energy value that is significant. You have other types that do not have heads and it is strictly forage. In a lot of those cases, it is extremely high quality forage, so those will be the highest quality forages you can get anywhere on the market. Cane is a variety, which is often a forage, and it adds versatility agronomically and traditionally."

Continuing to Learn

Riedel continues to learn more about how to improve his sorghum-dairy connection.

"With the three years I have been doing this, I raised sorghum on dryland corners when I was in the cattle business for bailing. But this irrigated, it is a whole new program to be raising irrigated cane silage," Riedel said. "I am still learning. I am demonstrating with different seeds, and different companies trying to find a fit, and I think it is a good program."

At first, neighboring producers were against the idea of growing forage sorghum for the dairies' cattle, but they soon changed their perspective after seeing Riedel's success in profitability.

"They seemed to notice the bottom line looked a whole lot better, especially with the prices of commodities right now," Riedel said. "It just puts more money in your pocket at the end of the year."

2016 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 three-year lease on a new pick-up, an ATV and lawnmower on the line, growers pushed close to that mark again this year, and the industry set a natioanl yield record with an average of 76.5 bushels per acre. This year's national and state winners will be recognized at Friday, March 3, 2017, during Commodity Classic, March 2–4 in San Antonio, Texas. Congratulations to this year's NSP Yield Contest winners!

NATIONAL WINNERS

Note: National winners are selected from state first place winners

Dryland Conventional-Till

1 184.80 bu/ac
Winter Johnston
Fulton County, PA
Pioneer 84G62

2 179.23 bu/ac
Ben Merrick Farms, LLC
Pointe Coupee County, LA
DEKALB DKS53-53

3 179.10 bu/ac
Chris Santini
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

Dryland Double Crop

1 198.36 bu/ac
Sam Santini Jr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

2 163.14 bu/ac
Robert Hoffines
Lancaster County, PA
Pioneer 84G62

3 143.82 bu/ac
Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust
Davidson County, NC
Pioneer 84P80

Dryland No-Till

1 178.04 bu/ac
Robert Santini Jr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

2 174.40 bu/ac
Harry Johnston
Fulton County, PA
DEKALB DKS37-07

3 173.54 bu/ac
Terry Vissing
Clark County, IN
DEKALB DKS38-88

educed-Till

1 184.59 bu/ac
Travis Walker
Caldwell County, MO
Pioneer 84P72

2 179.58 bu/ac
Matthew Santini
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

3 171.10 bu/ac
Ronald Glissendorf
Aurora County, SD
DEKALB DKS29-28

Irrigated Conventional-Till

1 208.40 bu/ac
Jim Boehlke - Bell-Key Farms
Canyon County, ID
Pioneer 85Y40

2 205.08 bu/ac
Steven Albracht
Castro County, TX
Pioneer 85Y40

3 191.14 bu/ac
Scott Jewett
Harlan County, NE
Pioneer 84P80

Irrigated Double Crop

1 176.33 bu/ac
Jeffrey Barlieb
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

2 170.04 bu/ac
Michael D. Ball
Canyon County, ID
Pioneer 85Y40

3 158.19 bu/ac
Howard Deshong
Lancaster County, PA
Pioneer 84G62

Irrigated No-Till

1 188.90 bu/ac
Robert & John Reznik
Moore County, TX
Pioneer 84P80

2 188.44 bu/ac
Beckman Farms
Sheridan County, KS
Pioneer 84G62

3 156.95 bu/ac
Jeff Scates
White County, IL
Pioneer 84G62

Irrigated Reduced-Till

1 197.68 bu/ac
Ron Robison
Harlan County, NE
Pay Dirt J300

2 184.63 bu/ac
Robert Santini Sr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 84G62

3 159.79 bu/ac
Dicky Haron
Mississippi County, MO
DEKALB DKS54-00

National Food-Grade Winners

Non-Irrigated
122.89 bu/ac
Tripple Creek Farm
Yadkin County, NC
Sorghum Partners NK8828

Irrigated
197.68 bu/ac
Ron Robison
Harlan County, NE
Pay Dirt J300

STATE WINNERS

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
Dryland Conventional-Till						
1st	Colorado	Logan	Zach Wood	90.77	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Mark Randell & Rusty McLeod, LLC	76.32	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	Kathryn B. Scates	120.19	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Indiana	Knox	Carter & Sons Farms, LLC	132.61	DEKALB	DKS38-88
2nd	Indiana	Newton	Prairie's Edge Farming Co.	123.43	Pioneer	85P05
1st	Iowa	Van Buren	Charles Livesay	163.09	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Neosho	Bogner Land & Cattle	129.94	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Ellis	Haselhorst Farms Dean & Julie	117.84	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Louisiana	Pointe Coupee	Ben Merrick Farms, LLC	179.23	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Maryland	Charles	Jack Welch	88.87	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Michigan	Allegan	Jake Drozd	156.75	Pioneer	86G32
1st	Missouri	Livingston	Dave & Matt Hughes - Hughes Cattle Co.	151.38	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Missouri	Livingston	HRB Farming Partnership	146.94	DEKALB	DKS53-67
3rd	Missouri	Livingston	Dave Hughes - Hughes Farms	122.13	Pioneer	85G03
1st	Nebraska	Pawnee	Matthew J. Bloss	145.15	DEKALB	DKS53-67

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
2nd	Nebraska	Nance	Lynn Belitz	85.83	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Chris Santini	179.10	Pioneer	84G62
1st	New York	Oneida	Robert Pawlowski	137.84	Pioneer	87P06
1st	North Carolina	Perquimans	Gretchen S. Ownley	122.75	Pioneer	84P80
2nd	North Carolina	Yadkin	Triple Creek Farm	97.77	Sorghum Partners	NK8828
1st	Oklahoma	Texas	Fischer & Fischer	103.03	Pioneer	85Y34
2nd	Oklahoma	Texas	Fischer Family Farms, FLP	92.31	Pioneer	85Y34
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton	Winter Johnston	184.80	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Michael Shearer	120.03	Pioneer	84G62
1st	South Carolina	Clarendon	Gamble Family Farms	172.66	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix	David Knoll	135.31	Pioneer	88Y41
1st	Texas	Nueces	3D Farms	129.11	Pioneer	83P73
2nd	Texas	Fort Bend	Zdunkewicz Farms	127.19	Pioneer	83G19
3rd	Texas	Nueces	Legacy Farms	125.64	Pioneer	83P99
1st	Virginia	King William	Nicholas Mills	109.95	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Wisconsin	Manitowoc	Robert Danes	161.95	DEKALB	DK28E

Dryland Double Crop

1st	Alabama	Escambia	Weber Farms, LLC	107.07	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Florida	Lafayette	Rusty McLeod & Folsom Farms Partnership	90.82	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	John A. Scates	124.67	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Illinois	Bond	Jim Stoecklin Farms - Stephanie Gaffner	117.86	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Kansas	Ottawa	Came Farms Inc.	110.14	Pioneer	86P20
2nd	Kansas	Dickinson	Mark Pettijohn	97.44	Pioneer	86P20
1st	Kentucky	Daviess	Philip Thompson	127.79	Pioneer	86P90
1st	Maryland	Montgomery	William F. Willard Farms, LLC	102.53	DEKALB	DKS38-88
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Sam Santini Jr.	198.36	Pioneer	84G62
1st	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	143.82	Pioneer	84P80
2nd	North Carolina	Perquimans	Laurence Chappell	100.19	Pioneer	84P80
3rd	North Carolina	Union	Dale Little	74.04	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Robert Hoffines	163.14	Pioneer	84G62
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix	David Knoll	80.34	Pioneer	88Y41

Dryland No-Till

1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	119.29	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Colorado	Washington	Diamond Farms	129.12	DEKALB	DKS28-05
2nd	Colorado	Washington	Needmore Farms	128.09	DEKALB	DKS28-05
3rd	Colorado	Phillips	MW Miller Farms, LLC	123.32	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Delaware	Kent	Frank G. Hrupsa	87.12	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Mark & Taylor Randell Family Farms	69.56	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	White	Mark Scates	146.12	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Illinois	White	Tyler J. Wooten	125.97	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Indiana	Clay	Terry Vissing	173.54	DEKALB	DKS38-88
2nd	Indiana	Gibson	Will Scott	122.78	Pioneer	87P06
1st	Iowa	Mahaska	S & A Farms	139.57	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Kansas	Wichita	Vulgamore Family Farms	173.38	Pioneer	87P06

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
3rd	Kansas	Sheridan	Beckman Farms	154.05	Pioneer	85G46
1st	Kentucky	Webster	Pat Thompson	95.75	Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Kentucky	Webster	Joe Thompson	90.88	Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Kentucky	Webster	Philip Thompson	70.98	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Maryland	Montgomery	William F. Willard Farms, LLC	162.28	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Missouri	Cooper	Brumback Farms Inc.	146.95	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Missouri	Gasconade	Sassmann Farms, LLC	124.33	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Nebraska	Furnas	Brian Ballou	167.56	Nu Tech	GS663
2nd	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	152.71	Sorghum Partners	SP73B12
3rd	Nebraska	Pawnee	Mark Bloss	148.87	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Robert Santini Jr.	178.04	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	New Jersey	Warren	Ron Sigler	161.68	Pioneer	84G62
3rd	New Jersey	Warren	Brad Sigler	149.18	Pioneer	84G62
1st	North Carolina	Yadkin	Triple Creek Farm	130.62	DEKALB	DKS53-53
2nd	North Carolina	Perquimans	Laurence Chappell	109.32	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Cimarron	Drew Allen	139.09	Alta Seeds	AG1203
2nd	Oklahoma	Nowata	Scotty Herriman	126.30	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton	Harry Johnston	174.40	DEKALB	DKS37-07
2nd	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Bob Shearer	169.09	Pioneer	84G62
1st	South Carolina	Clarendon	Steven Gamble	117.07	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	South Dakota	Aurora	Ronald Glissendorf	166.78	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Texas	Ochiltree	Sell Grain Inc.	120.12	DEKALB	DKS37-07
2nd	Texas	Lipscomb	L & L Farms	104.29	DEKALB	DKS37-07
3rd	Texas	Deaf Smith	Crest Agro Inc	77.80	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Virginia	Hanover	Gary Martin	116.72	Pioneer	83P17
2nd	Virginia	Rockingham	Jordan Bros. Dairy, LLC	103.24	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Wisconsin	Fond du Lac	Bertrams Ledgeland Dairy	142.08	DEKALB	DK28E

Dryland Reduced-Till

1st	Alabama	Escambia	Weber Farms, LLC	85.23	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Arkansas	Jackson	D & M Farms	94.32	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Colorado	Kit Carson	Tim Stahlecker	66.50	DEKALB	DKS28-05
2nd	Colorado	Logan	Danny & Lorrie Wood	65.78	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Delaware	Kent	A. Downes Warren Jr.	79.45	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Florida	Columbia	Tommy & Christina Taylor	77.31	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Illinois	White	Mike R. Scates	140.33	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Indiana	Gibson	Phil Scott	130.00	Pioneer	86P20
2nd	Indiana	Jasper	Prairie's Edge Farming Co.	115.06	Pioneer	85P05
1st	Kansas	Washington	Lee Pifer	121.88	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Saline	Mark Pettijohn	121.62	Pioneer	85Y40
3rd	Kansas	Washington	Long Farms - Jerry & Sue Long	106.67	DEKALB	DKS53-67
1st	Maryland	Charles	Jack Welch	95.60	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Missouri	Caldwell	Travis Walker	184.59	Pioneer	84P72
2nd	Missouri	Linn	Craig Ward	172.92	Pioneer	87P06
3rd	Missouri	Ralls	Brandon Holley	146.51	Channel	7B30
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	146.11	Pioneer	84G62

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
2nd	Nebraska	Harlan	Ron Robison	137.74	Pay Dirt	J300
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Matthew Santini	179.58	Pioneer	84G62
1st	New York	Oneida	Mark Pawlowski	101.11	Channel	6B50
1st	North Carolina	Davidson	Billy H. Bowers Farm Trust	142.12	Pioneer	84P80
2nd	North Carolina	Perquimans	Laurence Chappell	107.30	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Cimarron	Drew Allen	126.93	Alta Seeds	AG1203
2nd	Oklahoma	Garfield	Ed Regier Farms	115.58	Pioneer	84P80
3rd	Oklahoma	Comanche	Wyatt Farms	79.83	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Jessica Deshong	154.66	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	South Carolina	Clarendon	Jason Gamble	139.92	DEKALB	DKS54-00
1st	South Dakota	Aurora	Ronald Glissendorf	171.10	DEKALB	DKS29-28
2nd	South Dakota	Charles Mix	Lee A. Linnell	137.71	Pioneer	87P06
1st	Virginia	King William	John N. Mills III	112.07	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Wisconsin	Calumet	Mike Danes	152.73	DEKALB	DK28E

Irrigated Conventional-Till

1st	Arkansas	Clay	EDL Farms	98.10	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Florida	Lafayette	Rusty McLeod & Terry Folsom Farms	107.08	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Idaho	Canyon	Jim Boehlke - Bell-Key Farms	208.40	Pioneer	85Y40
1st	Illinois	White	Joseph Scates	135.42	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Kiowa	Ki Gamble	181.41	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Wichita	Galen Berning	175.74	Pioneer	84P72
3rd	Kansas	Sheridan	Jeff Wessel	130.31	Pioneer	85G03
1st	Minnesota	Stearns	Joe Krippner	143.32	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Scott Jewett	191.14	Pioneer	84P80
1st	Oklahoma	Cimarron	Nathan Johnson	185.41	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Texas	Castro	Steven Albracht	205.08	Pioneer	85Y40
2nd	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	134.32	DEKALB	DKS53-67
3rd	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	121.31	DEKALB	DKS53-67

Irrigated Double Crop

1st	Florida	Lafayette	Terry Folsom & Rusty McLeod Farms	148.72	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Idaho	Canyon	Michael D. Ball	170.04	Pioneer	85Y40
1st	Illinois	Gallatin	Hugh David Scates	125.21	Pioneer	P84G62
1st	Kansas	Finney	Harold Mai	142.65	Pioneer	86G32
2nd	Kansas	Finney	Jeff Mai	137.90	Pioneer	86G32
3rd	Kansas	Kiowa	Randolph Nusz	96.39	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Maryland	Charles	Jack Welch	71.35	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	Minnesota	Stearns	Joe Krippner	129.71	DEKALB	DKS28-05
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Jeffrey Barlieb	176.33	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Oklahoma	Texas	Mark & Aaron Witt	118.95	Pioneer	87P06
2nd	Oklahoma	Texas	ANL Farms	109.14	Pioneer	87P06
3rd	Oklahoma	Texas	Mark Witt	106.65	Pioneer	87P06
1st	Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Howard Deshong	158.19	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	123.40	DEKALB	DKS53-67
2nd	Texas	Hidalgo	Fike Farms	119.55	DEKALB	DKS53-67

STATE WINNERS, *continued*

Place	State	County	Name	Yield (bu/ac)	Seed Brand	Variety
Irrigaten No-Till						
1st	Delaware	Kent	Frank G. Hrupsa	141.04	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Mark Randell & Tommy Taylor Partnership	138.08	Sorghum Partners	SP7715
1st	Illinois	White	Jeff Scates	156.95	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Kansas	Sheridan	Beckman Farms	188.44	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Kansas	Finney	Jeff Mai	176.21	DEKALB	DKS53-53
1st	Missouri	Mississippi	Dicky Hanor	158.85	DEKALB	DKS54-00
1st	Texas	Moore	Robert & John Reznik	188.90	Pioneer	84P80
2nd	Texas	Ochiltree	Monte Wright	167.19	Pioneer	84G62
Irrigated Reduced-Till						
1st	Florida	Suwannee	Mark Randell & Tommy Taylor	136.84	Pioneer	83P17
1st	Idaho	Canyon	Michael D. Ball	121.92	Pioneer	85Y40
1st	Missouri	Mississippi	Dicky Hanor	159.79	DEKALB	DKS54-00
1st	Nebraska	Harlan	Ron Robison	197.68	Pay Dirt	J300
2nd	Nebraska	Harlan	Bretta Robison	196.62	Pay Dirt	J300
3rd	Nebraska	Harlan	Duane L. Vorderstrasse	175.64	Pioneer	84G62
1st	New Jersey	Warren	Robert Santini Sr.	184.63	Pioneer	84G62

Q&A with John Miller

Why Marketing Your Crop Matters

The 2017 crop year will present tremendous challenges for U.S. producers. However, if history repeats itself, opportunities for profitable pricing will also exist. To take advantage, producers must be proactive. For a firsthand look at how, I caught up with John Miller, owner of Caldwell, Texas-based Southwest Agribusiness Consulting.

John Duff: Tell me a little about Southwest Agribusiness Consulting.

John Miller: We assist producers in developing individualized price risk management plans and executing these plans with discipline. We also help producers find the right elevator, access cross-country buyers and brokers, use a trading account to reduce reliance on cash markets, build storage to better manage harvest and selling opportunities as well as vertically integrate. We feel there is more risk in doing nothing than in making profit-oriented decisions utilizing sound risk management principles.

JD: Price is only half the story when it comes to profitability. December corn futures have rallied to profitable levels three summers in a row, and producers who knew their per bushel costs were able to lock profits in an otherwise down farm economy. Do you consider costs and the level at which producers can market profitably when you help develop risk management plans?

JM: Having a sense of production costs is a foundational requirement for any marketing plan. It is often difficult to assess costs since input prices are always changing, tillage and chemical use can change from year to year and ultimate yields can vary. However, having that cost number in mind frees producers up to approach the market more confidently. I can attest producers with a good understanding of their costs are much better prepared to step through a risk management plan.

JD: How early are your producers locking a portion of their price or even guaranteeing bushels?

JM: It is not uncommon for producers to have futures—and basis in some rare cases—set on a portion of a crop a year in advance. To sell that early, however, producers typically seek a premium from the market. After that first sales decision, the focus turns to acreage, yield potential and evaluating price rallies for opportunity.

JD: The biggest fears most producers have are being unable to deliver on contracts and missing topside during rallies. These fears are understandable, but tools exist to manage these risks as well.

JM: We use these tools frequently. If production potential is uncertain, we advise using put options. Put options are preferable for many of our producers since their risk is calculable and limited to the option premium. If the producer purchased call options in the early stages of the marketing plan (which we often recommend), he or she can sell futures and have at least some protection against margin requirements as long as the call option is in place.

JD: Many areas of the Sorghum Belt see their worst basis levels at harvest, so knowing when to lock and avoiding the typical fall downside is important. However, keeping some opportunity in place in case of rallies is not unwise. What portion of their crop do your producers leave uncovered?

JM: When using put options or futures contracts, we rarely recommend hedging more than half the crop before harvest season, particularly for non-irrigated producers. This is partly due to the fact we have likely made some forward cash sales. Additionally, we do not want to add inordinate risk to our producers' businesses by having them spend too much on price protection relative to the size of their crop. For irrigated producers, we might recommend the hedged percentage go as high as two-thirds.

JD: How much of their crop do your producers sell forward?

JM: It is not unusual for our producers to have one-third to one-half of their crop sold in the cash market at the start of harvest with another third protected with put options or futures contracts. Some years call for more aggressiveness, especially if early crop development is going well. Selling more than half the crop before harvest is a strategy typically reserved for irrigated producers or producers who purchase call options early in the season to help fund production shortfall buyouts.

Read the full interview at SorghumGrowers.com. John Miller can be reached at 979-219-1864 or jmiller@agconsult.net.

Sorghum *Update*

Brought to you by the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission Information and Research UPDATE

The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission (KGSC) vision is focused on increasing grain sorghum profitability and being recognized as a valuable asset by the Kansas grain sorghum producer. The KGSC directs the investment of funds generated by the grain sorghum checkoff to enhance the profitability of the grain sorghum producers. Since the inception of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, the KGSC has invested over $2.5 million in research.

The KGSC approved funding of over $580,000 worth of research with Kansas State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service and Heartland Plant Innovation. The KGSC Chairman Stephen Bigge stated, "The commission has invested two million dollars of grower's checkoff dollars on research projects in the last three years. We have been using these investments to fund research focused on priorities like stand ability, drought tolerance, yield, and weed control. We believe funding research in these areas will help to enhance producer profitability both today and in the future."

Key 2016-2017 Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission Research Investments
Best Management Practices for Top-Yields in Sorghum
Sorghum Yield and Profitability Response to Water Supply and Irrigation Management
Physiological and Genetic Characterization of Grain Sorghum for Enhancing Terminal Heat and Drought Stress
Efficacy of Atrazine, Huskie and Diacamba on Palmer Amaranth under Temperature Stress
Evaluating on Sorghum Germ plasm for Herbicide Tolerance
Germplasm Screening Host-Plant Interactions and Inoculation Techniques for Sorghum Stalk Rot Diseases in Kansas
Improved Genomic Mapping and Marker-Assisted Selection for Cold Tolerance in Grain Sorghum
Evaluating tools to manage the Sugarcane Aphid
Development of sorghum parental (A/B and R) lines with enhanced drought and cold tolerance
Market Development Grant
Breeding Sorghum for Improved Production and Utilization
Incorporating Sorghum into the cropping system in Eastern Kansas
Development of Long-Term USDA ARS PSGD Sorghum Breeding Presence in Kansas
Sorghum Double Haploid Technology for Kansas Farmers
SDH Technology: Analysis and Enhancement of Haploid Inducing Sorghum Lines

Above is a listing of the projects that KGSC will be funding beginning October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017. For more information about these projects, please contact the KGSC at admin@ksgrainsorghum.org.

Responding to farmers' need for better weed control the Commission is investing in a herbicide screening project that evaluates sorghum germplasm for herbicide tolerance. Also, the KGSC responded to a timely priority for Kansas farmers by funding a best management practices and economics of irrigated sorghum project. Sorghum farmers will have access to current water research with a coordinated research project that addresses best management practices, updating the water efficiency curve and associated water farm economics.

For more information about the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, visit our website at www.ksgrainsorghum.org, or contact your commissioner. District 1 – Lonnie Wilson, Colby; District 2 - Greg Graff, Marienthal; District 3 – Mike O'Brate, Ingalls; District 4 – Stephen Bigge, Stockton, Chairman; District 5 – Clayton Short, Assaria, Vice-chairperson; District 6 – Jay Zimmerman, South Haven; District 7 – Nathan Larson, Riley, Secretary/Treasurer ; District 8 - Jeff Casten, Quenemo; District 9 - Gary Kilgore, Chanute, or contact us at admin@ksgrainsorghum.org, www.ksgrainsorghum.org.

Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, 795 22nd Rd. NW, Lebo, KS 66856
(785) 477-9474, www.ksgrainsorghum.org

CHICKEN, LEEK, CARROT AND SORGHUM SOUP

Crafted by Hope Dillon, owner of The Drop in Kansas City, this hardy chicken and sorghum soup will help chase the cold away. Chop up the carrot, leek, red pepper and tomato, and sautee to perfection. Top your masterpiece with cheddar cheese and enjoy with your favorite bread.

What You'll Need:

7 cups chicken stock
1 cup cooked grain sorghum
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 leek, sliced
1 lb chicken, cooked, cubed
1 carrot, sliced
1 red pepper, chopped
1 tomato, diced
2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
1 tablespoon cilantro, dried
4 tablespoons cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. In a pan, add olive oil, leek, carrot, red pepper and tomato. Cook the ingredients until tender.
2. Once vegetables are soft, add chicken, sotck, chipotle peppers, sorghum and cilantro. Bring to a boil for 5-10 minutes.
3. Top soup with cheddar cheese and serve with your favorite bread or tortilla chips.

For this recipe and more, visit: SimplySorghum.com

How to choose healthier cereals for your family...

GRAIN BERRY® CEREALS OFFER BETTER CARB TO FIBER RATIO!

Carb-to-Fiber-Ratio Health Check as you shop:

1. Find "Total Carbohydrates" and "Fiber" in the nutrition data table on your cereals.
2. Divide "Fiber" grams into "Total Carbohydrates" grams.
3. Look for a ratio of Carbs to Fiber of under 10 to 1.
4. This is based on the most common whole grain (wheat) with 10 grams of carbs to 1 gram of fiber).
5. If your cereal choice is less than 10 to 1, it is a wise choice.
6. For example, Grain Berry Bran Flakes has 24 grams total carbs and 5 grams fiber – or a ratio of about 5 to 1 (great).

Grain Berry has a favorable carb to fiber ratio of under 10:1 because it has whole grains, less sugar and grown-in fiber, not "borrowed" fiber.

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SG

Winter 2017 www.sorghumcheckoff.com

SORGHUM CHECKOFF

NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S INSIDE

CHECKOFF ADVANCES SUGARCANE APHID RESEARCH

Despite the spread of the sugarcane aphid to 90 percent of U.S. sorghum acres in the 2016 growing season, producers set a national yield record at 76.5 bushels per acre. The Sorghum Checkoff is committed to helping producers continue to combat this unwelcome pest while continuing to improve the crop and management practices.

"While the sugarcane aphid was a major issue for many producers this year, we believe the impact was lessened by management strategies implemented based on knowledge gained from research trials in 2015," said Sorghum Checkoff Agronomist Brent Bean, Ph.D. "The Sorghum Checkoff board of directors invested $300,000 in sugarcane aphid research in 2016, and research partnerships have been developed with universities and extension to help provide more solutions for growers."

Bean said results from this year's targeted research, which will be available early 2017, will help fill sugarcane aphid management knowledge gaps. The checkoff, along, with key collaborators identified six key research areas of focus in 2016.

Sugarcane aphid thresholds are currently based on hybrids highly susceptible to the pest. This research study sought to determine if the treatment threshold should differ for those hybrids identified with some tolerance to the sugarcane aphid.

Most research completed pertaining to treatment thresholds has focused on sugarcane aphid infestations occurring pre-flowering. This research examined the effect of the sugarcane aphid on yield when infestations occur post flowering and how the treatment threshold may need to be adjusted.

Sugarcane aphid infestation near sorghum harvest can cause harvesting issues as a result of honeydew on the upper leaves and with aphids in the sorghum head. Studies were conducted to determine the benefits and limitations of using a harvest-aid on reducing sugarcane aphid populations and honeydew at harvest.

Sugarcane aphid infestations often occur the same time other pests, such as midge and headworms, are present. Trials were conducted to determine the best treatment or treatment combinations to control multiple pests at the same time.

Sivanto Prime and Transform WG are the two products recommended for use in controlling the sugarcane aphid. Studies were conducted to determine the most effective rates and impact on sugarcane aphid control when mixing with other insecticides.

Seed treatments are known to control the sugarcane aphid early in the growing season. To investigate this

further, research was conducted to determine how long control could be expected to last.

"A special thanks to the efforts of those in the research community who made this research possible," Bean said. "The results of these studies will be imperative to the coming growing season."

Results of these research focus areas were summaraized during the January 2017 Sugarcane Aphid Research Exchange meeting and are expected to be available within the first quarter of the year.

The sugarcane aphid has and will continue to be a major priority for the Sorghum Checkoff, and plans are in the works to fund additional sugarcane aphid research in 2017.

Bean said likely areas of focus will investigate management of the sugarcane aphid late in the growing season as well as managing the aphid when other pests are present in the field. In addition, alternative treatments will continue to be examined. For more information regarding the sugarcane aphid, visit SorghumCheckoff.com.

INVESTMENT IN CHECKOFF FUNDS MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR FORAGE SORGHUM GROWERS

When grain sorghum producers sell their crop at the local elevator or other marketplaces, they pay an assessment of 0.6 percent of the net market value to help invest in expanding and maintaining demand as well as putting money toward advancements in research. While this is commonplace for grain sorghum producers, many may not know that an assessment is collected on forage sorghum, as well.

"Assessment dollars are collected by the first purchaser when a sorghum producer sells their forage," said Florentino Lopez, Sorghum Checkoff executive director. "Examples could include livestock and dairy operations."

Forage sorghum collection occurs on sold sorghum forage, sorghum hay, sorghum haylage, sorghum billets and sorghum silage. Lopez said forage sorghum is assessed at a rate of 0.35 percent of the net market value received by the producer. Forage sorghum utilized within an operation is exempt.

"Often, forage sorghum is grown and utilized by the same individual or entity, such as a dairy," Lopez said. "In this instance, the forage is exempt from the assessment because collection only occurs on forages sold. This can mislead growers to think all forage is exempt from the assessment."

An investment in the Sorghum Checkoff can make a big difference in the industry. As a producer-funded organization, Lopez said the Sorghum Checkoff is committed to efficiently investing grower dollars with the goal of increasing producer profitability.

Assessments put new money into research for development of sorghum genetics, disease and insect resistance, cold and drought tolerance and other defensive traits.

A focus on forage market development helps expand the industry through targeted research investigating topics like digestibility for livestock feed. Checkoff funds are also used to generate educational information to help producers learn about the latest advances in sorghum production, such as the checkoff forage sorghum production guides.

"Paying forage sorghum assessments is very much an investment," Lopez said. "Through the checkoff's research, promotion and education that helps move the needle, more productivity and demand for sorghum will ultimately give forage sorghum growers the best return on their investment."

To learn more about how the Sorghum Checkoff benefits forage and all other sorghum growers, visit SorghumCheckoff.com.

LEADERSHIP SORGHUM EXPERIENCES PUBLIC RESEARCH, DOMESTIC MARKETS

Leadership Sorghum Class III members traveled to Kansas City, Nov. 7-9, 2016, to participate in the second session of the two-year program. This opportunity allowed class members to meet with industry leaders and have a firsthand look into sorghum public research and domestic markets.

The class visited the BNSF Intermodal Facility, Federal Grain Inspection Service National Grain Center and DeLong Grain. John Deere and Dairy Farmers of America also hosted the group at their Kansas City locations where the group met with individuals from CHS, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Cargill. Jeff Mai of Garden City, Kansas, said he was impressed by the scale of the facilities and how smoothly the operations ran.

"It was a really great experience learning about all the different parts of the sorghum industry," said Mai. "Getting to see all these different sides of the industry made me appreciate just how much potential sorghum has."

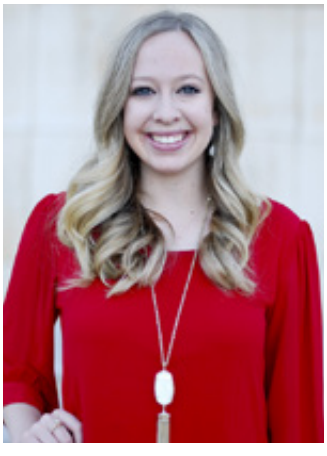
For the class members' professional development, Sarah Aubrey with ACT Training, conducted a session on purposeful networking, providing class members the tools to be more comfortable and confident in networking with industry leaders. Later, a panel of professionals spoke to the class about board training. These sessions highlighted the importance of professionalism and networking in the agriculture industry.

"We had a session on networking, and it has been really cool to see that come into play with the other class members," said Chad Haden of Clay Center, Kansas. "It has been a great opportunity to network with the other class members and learn about how they run their operations."

Experiencing sorghum as a consumer food product, the class enjoyed a dinner highlighting sorghum prepared by Hope Dillon at The Drop, an upscale bistro specializing in contemporary American cuisine. To start, the class enjoyed a a black bean and avocado sorghum salad as well as a chicken and sorghum soup. The main course featured a sorghum risotto with shrimp scampi and barbecue pork roast with a vegetable sorghum cake. The meal was rounded out with an apple sorghum gingerbread for dessert.

The class will meet for their third session in Washington, D.C., in January 2017 where they will learn about the role the government plays in the sorghum industry, checkoffs and interest organizations.

TAYLOR JOINS SORGHUM CHECKOFF AS NEW COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



The Sorghum Checkoff recently named Elisa Taylor as the organization's new communications manager.

In this role, Taylor will provide and implement strategic communications planning for all non-consumer program areas, such as crop improvement, agronomy and renewables. Taylor will also assist in other related organizational programs and projects for the Sorghum Checkoff.

"We are excited to welcome Elisa to the Sorghum Checkoff team," said Jennifer Blackburn, Sorghum Checkoff external affairs director. "Elisa brings great passion for her role with a widespread communications background and experience, which will help further our communications efforts."

Taylor graduated in December with her master's degree in interdisciplinary studies where her areas of focus were business administration, agricultural communications and editing. Taylor received her bachelor's degree in technical communication from Texas Tech University in December 2014. She gained her communications experience through internships with National Instruments, Lubbock's Home and Family Magazine, the Texas Tech University yearbook La Ventana and the Fraternity & Sorority Life office.

Casting a Safety Net with a Strong Reference Price

By John Duff

When the 2014 Farm Bill debate began in early 2010, an economic squeeze of the scale U.S. producers now face seemed impossible. Prices for all commodities rose to historic highs in 2008, and despite the global recession, profitability was strong and optimism was high. Many in agriculture thought farm prices had reached a new plateau.

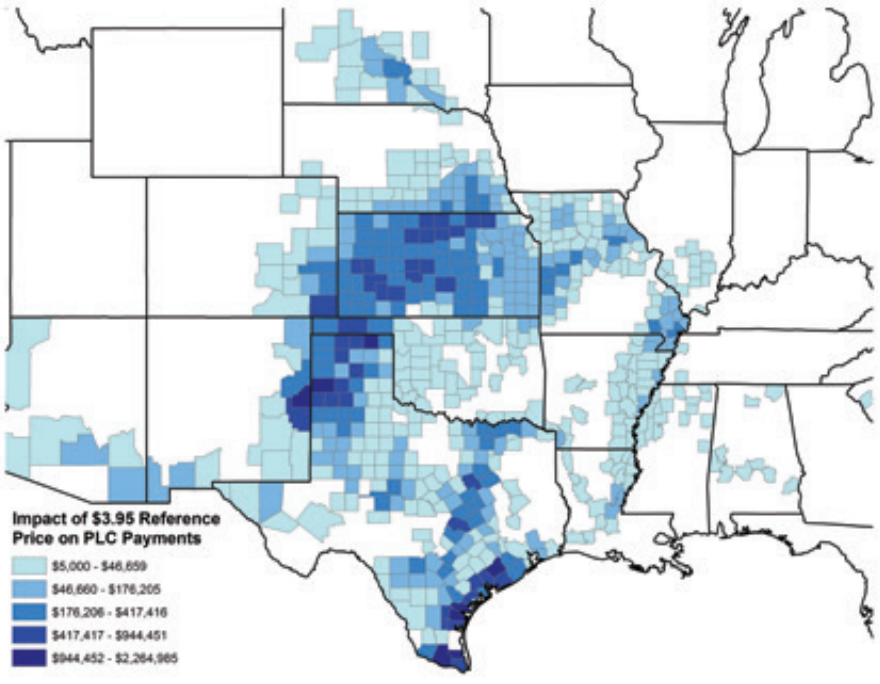
Yet, sorghum producers strongly supported a price protection option in the 2014 Farm Bill. With this in mind, National Sorghum Producers made a price safety net a top priority. And that work is providing support in the harshest downturn in the farm economy since the 1980s.

"We always hope prices will stay high," said Chris Cogburn, NSP senior policy adviser. "The Farm Bill is for bad times—not good times. We put in countless hours praying producers will never need the fruits of our labor. But markets are cyclical, and we knew this downturn would come eventually."

Knowing lower prices were inevitable, NSP strongly supported the price loss coverage (PLC) program. PLC is similar to the old countercyclical program, so the reference price is a key determinant in the quality of protection afforded. NSP worked closely with stakeholders including sorghum producers, economists and staff from the congressional agricultural committees to determine the price level that would provide adequate production cost coverage.

"We found a $3.95 reference price to be ideal for covering the production costs of the largest number of sorghum producers," said Cogburn. "Farm-level production data strongly supported a $3.95 reference price, and election and payment data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency confirms we were correct. Those areas we believed production costs were near that level overwhelmingly elected PLC."

Nationwide, 66 percent of sorghum producers elected PLC, including 54 percent in Kansas and 94 percent in Texas. These elections meant $197 million in PLC payments to sorghum producers in October 2016, and payments could be even larger in October 2017 depending on prices for the 2016 crop. The top five states receiving PLC payments for sorghum were Texas at $80 million, Kansas at $68 million, Missouri at $12.6 million, New Mexico at $9.0 million and Nebraska at $8.9 million.



▶ NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS secured a $3.95 reference price, above the corn price of $3.65, which provided significant added value for farmers who chose the Price Loss Coverage option.

Perhaps the most significant victory for sorghum producers in the 2014 Farm Bill was the $3.95 reference price itself. The reference price for corn was set at $3.70, and the reference price for sorghum would have been set at this level as well but for NSP's work surrounding cost of production. This extra $0.25 meant $77 million in additional PLC payments to sorghum producers, including $31 million in Texas and $27 million in Kansas.

The $3.95 reference price has importance beyond the PLC program as well. For the 2.9 million sorghum base acres for which the county-based agricultural risk coverage (ARC) option was elected, the price benchmark can never fall below $3.95. This threshold is significant as the five-year moving Olympic average price that determines the benchmark will likely include a price below $4.00 when payments are made in October 2017.

"ARC was the best option for us because benchmark yields for sorghum here in Nebraska were very good," said Don Bloss, a producer from Pawnee City, Nebraska, and current NSP chairman. "However, yield is only one piece of the equation, and lower prices may be here to stay for a while. If that happens, $3.95 will be a welcome plug."

Whether producers selected PLC or ARC, both Cogburn and Bloss urged producers to be mindful of payment limits in this price environment.

"We were in LDP territory for the first time in over a decade," Bloss said, referring to the loan deficiency payments made on wheat earlier in the year. "LDPs were a new concept to many younger producers in our area, and a lot of the veterans had to brush up as well. Given the size of some of the LDPs as well as ARC and PLC payments, some producers will have expensive wakeup calls."

To note, producers must be wary of payment limits if they collected large LDPs on wheat in 2016 as ARC and PLC payments made in 2017 will count against the same $125,000 payment limit. To avoid this situation for 2018, producers should consider using the commodity certificate exchange (CCE) program. This strategy would involve purchasing CCE certificates, taking out a marketing loan, forfeiting the grain and repaying the loan with the certificates. If executed on a single day, this would result in a payment equivalent to that day's LDP.

As Cogburn said, markets are cyclical. This downturn in the farm economy will not last forever, but sorghum producers can count on a strong reference price to help manage through the next few years of lower revenue.

New Sorghum Headers Improve Havest Efficiency

By Courtney Wingate

The U.S. sorghum crop is mostly harvested with rigid platform and draper headers, but new designs specifically tailored for sorghum are creating efficiencies that save producers time and money during harvest.

These new designs offer a wide array of benefits, meaning farmers can select more specialized headers for their crop conditions and stalk heights while also increasing efficiency in harvesting speed and maintenance.

James Born, a sorghum farmer from Perryton, Texas, used refurbished row crop headers for years. These older headers have multiple parts and are subject to wear and tear, which is why Born now prefers his new header manufactured by Bish Enterprises.

"I have been pleased with the Bish header," Born said. "Its new design eliminates the amount of moving parts and thus reduces maintenance when compared to the older row-crop header."

The Super Crop Header by Bish Enterprises is a minimalist designed header that reduces the cost of maintenance and the usage of fuel and horsepower by 30 percent, according to Alan Tejral, sales representative for Bish Enterprises. Along with the Super Crop Header, the Sunmaster by Sheyenne Tooling and Manufacturing and the Milo Star by Geringhoff have also elevated efficiency during harvest.

Sunmaster headers claim to increase the amount of grain coming into the combine by up to 30 percent through its uniquely designed vibrating pans that vibrate fallen heads of grain back into the combine. The Milo Star header was designed to harvest 250 bushels an acre while reducing the amount of stalk that goes through the combine, also maximizing efficiency.

The ability to harvest across conditions is also important for header efficiency.

Alan VanNahmen, creator of the Alternate Rotary Row Crop Option (ARRO) said the ARRO header has worked well in all types of harvesting conditions, including lower yield, non-irrigated environments, higher yield irrigated environments and weather-damaged situations as well as in fields infested with sugarcane aphids. In heavy honeydew, he said the header will not bog down.

"We gave it a good workout and a lot of other farmers did too," VanNahmen said. "Custom harvesters ran them harvesting sorghum as well as other crops. It worked out well and was successful."

The ARRO is a conversion kit that allows a standard corn head to be used to harvest sorghum, millet and sunflowers, according to VanNahmen. Having a header that can harvest sorghum in addition to other crops is a plus. The ARRO, the Sunmaster and 600FD HydraFlex Drapers and 600D Drapers by John Deere offer the same versatility, and many sorghum farmers have already taken advantage.

Scott Stroberg, a sorghum farmer from Hutchinson, Kansas, said having a header like the ARRO is more economical because it allows farmers to harvest multiple crops while also having the ability to pull grain heads on the ground into the combine.

Born agreed and adds he believes as technology progresses, headers specialized for sorghum will become more advanced and offer more benefits to farmers.

"People are trying to improve the design," Born said. "Whether its improved efficiency or better handling of challenging field conditions, I see good things coming from these new designs."

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Sorghum Shortcuts

NSP Hires Jordan Shearer as Executive Director for Colorado, New Mexico and Oklahoma

National Sorghum Producers recently hired Jordan Shearer as the executive director for the Colorado, New Mexico and Oklahoma state sorghum organizations.

The newly created position combines management of the state sorghum associations and commissions for the three states. As executive director, Shearer will oversee all sorghum-related activities in the three states as well as work with each group's board of directors to coordinate programs.

Shearer has served as chairman of the Oklahoma Sorghum Association for the last five years as well as working as a project director for the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and actively farming in Slapout, Oklahoma. He was also a member of Leadership Sorghum Class I, a Sorghum Checkoff program established in 2011.

NSP Legislative Committee Members Prepare for Annual D.C. Fly-In

In October National Sorghum Producers Chairman Don Bloss appointed six new members to the NSP Legislative Committee. The members of the NSP Legislative Committee guides NSP on agricultural policy issues and development in accordance with NSP's mission to improve the sorghum industry through advocacy and leadership. The newly appointed and existing committee members are gearing up for NSP's annual D.C. Fly-in in January. With many new congressional leaders and an approaching adminstration change, sorghum representatives look forward to busy few days educating new faces on Capitol Hill about issues important to the sorghum industry.

Commodity Classic

The 2017 Annual Commodity Classic is open for event registration and housing reservations. Rooms in this year's venue city of San Antonio are expected to book quickly, so those interested in attending should register as soon as possible! The 22st annual farmer-focused, farmer-led event is scheduled for March 2-4, 2017, in San Antonio, Texas. Register and book rooms at http://www.commodityclassic.com/.

National Sorghum Producers is bringing back its renowned Casino Night, the annual Sorghum PAC fundraiser is a must-attend event at Commodity Classic that had record attendance last year with more than $83,000 raised through ticket sales, sponsorships and auction items. If you wish to

support this endeavor in 2017, please contact Shelley Heinrich at shelleyh@sorghumgrowers.com. Auction items will become available Feb. 1 through PurpleWave.com.

NSP will also address critical issues to the sorghum industry during its annual Sorghum General Session. These topics include financial stability, chemical registrations, marketing sorghum, sugarcane aphid control conservation initiatives and farm policy among more. Watch for specific event details at SorghumGrowers.com/CommodityClassic.

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