

SPECIAL EDITION 2025

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS



SORGHUM

Grower

2024

YIELD CONTEST WINNERS

2024 POLICY YEAR-IN-REVIEW
A LAST-MINUTE SHOWDOWN

Get Ready For
COMMODITY CLASSIC
DENVER, MARCH 2 - 4

Included Inside

SORGHUM CHECKOFF NEWSLETTER
KANSAS SORGHUM NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS, 4201 N INTERSTATE 27, LUBBOCK, TX 79403



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From the CEO

A Busy 2024 Sets Up a Productive 2025



It is hard to believe 2024 has come to an end. It seems like yesterday, our board of directors and staff met to discuss how to tackle the

different items we expected to happen in 2024. While a number came to fruition, some will drag over into 2025 or beyond.

That is certainly the case for several legislative items which is a normal part of the legislative process. NSP Manager of Policy and Analysis Sydney Lundberg will lay out a detailed update on page 4.

Big picture, the year-end disaster, and economic assistance package is critical for many farming operations around the Sorghum Belt—and across the country; it's the difference between major financial loss and a breakeven year for most.

A major loss in the year end package is E-15 not getting approved. This is the fastest way to increase U.S. feed grain demand and will certainly help as we look at large stocks to use ratios and low prices for commodities.

Away from the D.C. Beltway, NSP staff worked with more than 450 growers in 2024 to collect data through NSP's USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities grant program to show the efficiency and resilience of sorghum. While it was another tough year across the Sorghum Belt, the data will continue to help benefit farmers and our industry

NSP also made two strategic hires from the NRCS ranks in Kansas and Texas to bolster our talent and understanding of conservation programs, and we continue to work with NSP members to help them qualify for conservation dollars in addition to working on policy issues to ensure NRCS programs work for sorghum farmers.

We continue to move forward on the crop insurance front to help our grower members. While we announced several improvements to sorghum crop insurance in 2024, our engagement will again be critical in 2025 as sorghum undergoes a thorough review of everything from rates to planting dates. Tune into our January webinars on this issue. Details are at SorghumGrowers.com/webinar.

While a farm bill did not get done in 2024, I believe we ended the year positioned to get it done in 2025, which will be our focus, along with a major tax bill, E-15, and the implementation of the 45Z credit for biofuels.

Looking back at 2024, I am proud of what the organization has accomplished. We thank you for supporting our organization and our industry, and we wish you a blessed 2025.

Tim Lust

Tim Lust, CEO

Photo by David Halloran

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SPECIAL EDITION 2025



ON THE COVER: Kenny Rathjen (left) and his farming partner, Monte Simerly, of Dalhart, Texas, earned the Bin Buster Award for producing the year's highest-yielding entry at 240.01 bushels per acre (bpa).

Congress delivers short-term relief. Farm bill in 2025?

By Sydney Lundberg

The political landscape in 2024 could be described in many ways: fragmented, polarized, or stagnant. Yet, as an eternal optimist, I see the year as on the brink—ready for action, just not quite there yet.

The final sessions of the 118th Congress were dominated by stop-gap measures and partisan battles, with lawmakers seemingly biding their time for an Administration better aligned with their priorities. One of the most persistent grassroots advocacy efforts emerged from rural America as the expiration of the 2018 farm bill loomed. Stakeholders grappled with uncertainties about farm programs, commodity support and disaster relief packages.

Individual commodity organizations, like National Sorghum Producers (NSP), made significant efforts, with NSP staff and leadership making more than a dozen trips to Capitol Hill. However, the dire need felt across farm country distinctively united the agricultural industry. In what became the largest and most unified effort in agriculture since 2001, farmers representing a variety of row crops and financial lenders rallied in Washington, D.C., in early September, pushing for a bipartisan, long-term farm bill before the year's end.

This group met with nearly 100 Congressional offices, launched a media campaign with op-eds and interviews, and sent a letter with over 300 endorsements to House and Senate leadership, stressing the urgency of meaningful legislation. The multi-commodity engagement influenced rank-and-file members. Yet, the clock on critical legislation continued to tick as financial margins for growers grew tighter.

Broader legislative efforts faced similar delays and partisanship. Appropriations for fiscal year 2024 were postponed to 2025. Infrastructure spending, healthcare reforms, immigration policy, and climate resilience measures remained critical issues but struggled to gain traction.

Despite widespread disappointment over another extension of the 2018 farm bill, the collective action of agricultural associations, including NSP, ensured producers received congressional support in 2024. Just seven days before the year-end funding deadline, negotiations regarding agriculture's inclusion in supplemental leg-

islation stalled. When the original package failed, the agricultural community swiftly united once more.

Kansas and Texas, the top states for sorghum production, were set to be major assistance recipients, making this component critical for sorghum farmers. NSP called on lawmakers from farm states to reject the bill if it did not include economic relief. On Saturday, Dec. 14, NSP board members and staff lobbied on behalf of sorghum growers through personal phone calls to Representatives and Senators, emphasizing the urgency of legislative action. Similarly, NSP members were encouraged to contact their elected officials.

NSP Chair Amy France highlighted the importance of support in a public statement.

“Farmers are operating under an increasingly bleak economic landscape in 2024, and projections for 2025 offer little improvement. Amid growing financial strain, the industry has emphasized the importance of assistance, but Congress has yet to take action. These mounting challenges pose significant risks to the financial viability of many farming operations...”

Days later, Congress reached a bipartisan agreement, unveiling a continuing resolution (CR) to extend government funding through mid-March while delivering over \$100 billion in emergency disaster relief. The bill



▲ NSP CEO TIM LUST discusses key agricultural issues with Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Okla., during a visit to his office.



▲ (R-L) NSP CEO Tim Lust, Chairwoman Amy France, Vice Chair Garrett Love, and Manager of Policy and Analysis Sydney Lundberg pose outside the Capitol during a break from congressional visits.

included several key provisions for sorghum, including a farm bill extension and substantial assistance. However, it also contained controversial elements, initially preventing its passage.

House leadership reformulated the package. The first revision, lacking bipartisan support and including a debt ceiling extension opposed by many Republicans, failed on the floor. Unfortunately, E-15 was removed during this time. Following closed-door meetings, Congress passed the bill, sending it to President Biden’s desk, where it was signed into law on Saturday, Dec. 21.

The economic assistance component provided \$10 billion to rural America. Using projected market year average prices from the December World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), the 10-year average yield, and production costs reported by the Economic Research Service in November, the anticipated payment for sorghum is roughly \$41 per acre. This translates to approximately \$241 million of economic assistance for sorghum growers nationwide. Payments are expected by March, with payment limitations of \$125,000 for individuals or entities with less than 75% of average gross income from farming and \$250,000 for those with 75% or more.

The package also included \$20.8 billion in disaster assistance for agriculture, addressing challenges faced by those impacted by natural disasters. Distribution of these

funds, at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, will be guided by legislation and is expected to follow a model similar to the Emergency Relief Program for 2020 and 2021. NSP will advocate for a streamlined release of funds to support growers facing significant weather-related losses across the Sorghum Belt in 2023 and 2024.

On a market front, the anticipated implementation of the Section 45Z tax credit for domestic clean fuel production is a beacon of hope for the agricultural sector. Its eventual rollout promises opportunities for sorghum producers, who are well-positioned to benefit from its provisions.

As lawmakers return to the Hill for the start of the 119th Congress, reconciliation negotiations will take center stage. Tax reform will likely be part of this package, with potential funding for a new farm bill. Whether as part of reconciliation or a separate effort, House Agriculture Committee Chairman GT Thompson has stated his intent “to move quickly to enact a five-year farm bill that aligns the farm safety net with the needs of producers.” Immigration policy, a key issue for agriculture, is also expected to play a significant role under the new Administration.

Although many questions remain unanswered, the outlook for 2025 includes the possibility of a new farm bill. As always, National Sorghum Producers will be on Capitol Hill, advocating for sorghum’s priorities and working toward solutions for the challenges ahead. 🌾



▲ TEXT “NSP TEXT” to 52886 to receive alerts relating to important policy developments in 2025.

Texas Panhandle Farm Earns Sorghum Bin Buster Award With 240.01 BPA Entry

By Jason Jenkins, DTN Crops Editor

Kenny Rathjen is no stranger to yield contests. In fact, entering them is part of the annual routine for him and his father, Richard. Yet while they have achieved recognition several times over the years, the overall top spot in a national contest had eluded the Rathjens -- until now.

On Monday, Dec. 16, the National Sorghum Producers (NSP) announced the winners of the 2024 National Sorghum Yield Contest. K&M Farms, operated by Kenny Rathjen and his farming partner, Monte Simerly, in Dalhart, Texas, earned the Bin Buster Award for producing the year's highest-yielding entry at 240.01 bushels per acre (bpa).

Organized by the National Sorghum Producers since 1985, the yield contest initially began as a means of increasing membership and educating producers on new management techniques, said Tim Lust, the organization's CEO.

"I want to congratulate all of the 2024 National Sorghum Yield Contest winners on their incredible achievements," NSP CEO Tim Lust said in a statement to DTN. "It's exciting to see growers like Kenny Rathjen, this year's Bin Buster with 240.01 bushels per acre, set the bar so high. These results are a testament to the hard work and innovative practices that strengthen the sorghum industry each year. I'm proud of what these farmers have accomplished and look forward to recognizing them at the Commodity Classic."

NSP also will induct a new member into its Hall of Fame when the organization meets at the Commodity Classic in Denver in early March. Joel Spring of Appanoose County, Iowa, placed first in the food grade sorghum category for the third time, earning himself the distinction.

PANHANDLE PROWESS

The winning entry was grown under pivot irrigation in a 50-acre field. Rathjen planted Pioneer 85P75, a 114-day red sorghum hybrid that's characterized as offering excellent top yield potential in both high-yield and tougher dryland environments. Rathjen noted that in 2021, another farming partner, Tom Vogel, earned first place in the Irrigated Western category with the hybrid, finishing third overall.

"It's one that we've used in the past," he said. "It really shines with big water, and on this particular circle, that's what we have. Big water."

The sorghum followed wheatlage in a double-crop rotation. The field received 12 tons of manure before the wheat crop was planted. After the wheatlage was harvested, the wheat stubble was double disked.

"We planted right into that on May 25 at a population of 75,000 seeds per acre on 30-inch rows. It was a very nice seedbed," Rathjen said. "We treat our sorghum like our corn. In addition to the carryover we had from the manure, we dribbled 28-0-0-5 out the back and watered it in. We have a liquid coultter rig, and we put an additional 45 gallons (per acre) through it. We fertigated with 10 gallons at three different times."

Spider mites, grasshoppers and head worms (corn earworm, fall armyworm and sorghum webworm) are the primary pests for sorghum in the region. Rathjen applied Dimilin 2L on June 12 and Steward EC on Aug. 7 to control any infestations. In addition, he applied fungicide twice. A half-rate of Trivapro went on July 26, followed by Absolute Maxx, which was applied with Steward EC on Aug. 7.

"The fungicide really helped keep the plants healthy. I mean, the stay-green on it was just incredible," he said. "It really added to test weight."

However, it was an herbicide application that Rathjen made on July 5 that he thinks contributed greatly to his yield -- even though it had the neighbors wondering if he'd made a mistake.

"The old-timers who grew wheat would burn it (with herbicide) because it yields better. We've done something similar with soybeans; you'll get a shorter, bushier plant with more pods," he explained. "We were getting a few weeds in this milo, so after talking to my agronomist, we decided to smoke it, even though the crop was looking beautiful."

The combination of herbicides -- including Huskie, Medal EC, WeedMaster, atrazine and chelated iron, along with a little ammonium sulfate and an adjuvant -- had the desired effect.

"It looked ugly for a few days, but then we poured the water to it, and within a week, it started to green up," Rathjen said, adding that the crop received 16

inches of irrigation during the season, supplemented by 6 inches of rainfall. "It didn't get quite as tall, but we just had all kind of tillers full of grain. It was unreal. I know that's what gave us our yield."

While he plans to enjoy this year's accolade, Rathjen said he already has an eye toward next season. "We've got an 80-acre circle that I want to split-plant in 15-inch rows," he said. "I want to try and beat the world record. That's my goal. I really like growing milo. If you've got water and a little help from Mother Nature, you can grow big yields." 🌾

NATIONAL Winners

Note: National winners are selected from state first, second and third place winners

1. 158.94 bu/ac

FOOD GRADE

JnL Farms
Appanoose County, IA
Richardson G37

IRRIGATED WEST

Top Yield!

1. 240.01 bu/ac

K&M Farms
Dallam County, TX
Pioneer 85P75

2. 226.18 bu/ac

Darrol Miller Farm, Inc.
Comanche County, KS
DEKALB DKS44-07

3. 185.17 bu/ac

Ormiston Farms
Seward County, KS
Pioneer 85P75

1. 183.05 bu/ac

Stewart Family Farms
Washington County, KS
Pioneer 84G62

2. 131.88 bu/ac

Matthew J Bloss
Pawnee County, NE
Pioneer 84P72

3. 108.78 bu/ac

Roger and Marilyn Fischer
Texas County, OK
Pioneer 86P20

DRYLAND-TILLAGE WEST

DRYLAND-TILLAGE EAST

1. 225.18 bu/ac

Jeffrey Barlieb
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 85P58

2. 223.68 bu/ac

Galt Porter
Mercer County, MO
Pioneer 84G62

3. 199.48 bu/ac

Williams Bros Farms LLC
Clark County, IL
DEKALB DKS38-16

1. 192.05 bu/ac

Dylan Knoll
Charles Mix County, SD
Pioneer 88P71

2. 188.65 bu/ac

David Knoll
Charles Mix County, SD
Pioneer 89Y79

3. 183.10 bu/ac

Alma Ag Supply LLC
Harlan County, NE
Pioneer 85Y88

DRYLAND-NO TILL WEST

DRYLAND-NO TILL EAST

1. 209.73 bu/ac

Billy H Bowers Farm Trust
Davidson County, NC
Pioneer 84G62

2. 195.49 bu/ac

HRB Farming Partnership Ben Beetsma
Livingston County, MO
DEKALB DKS54-07

3. 181.49 bu/ac

Santino Santini Jr.
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 85P58

1. 190.35 bu/ac

Chris Santini
Warren County, NJ
Pioneer 85P58

2. 176.39 bu/ac

Robert Santini
Hunterdon County, NJ
Pioneer 85P58

3. 156.73 bu/ac

Howie D
Fulton County, PA
Pioneer 85P75

IRRIGATED EAST

STATE *Winners*

PLACE	STATE	COUNTY	NAME	YIELD (BU/AC)	SEED BRAND	VARIETY
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IRRIGATED WEST

1st	Colorado	Weld County	Casey Cantwell, Cantwell Farms LLC	109.77	Dyna-Gro	M59GB57
1st	Kansas	Comanche County	Darrol Miller Farm, Inc.	226.18	DEKALB	DKS44-07
2nd	Kansas	Seward County	Ormiston Farms	185.17	Pioneer	85P75
3rd	Kansas	Stafford County	Curtis Brothers Farms Inc	181.97	Pioneer	85Y88
1st	Nebraska	Harlan County	Jewett Farms	174.09	Pioneer	84P94
2nd	Nebraska	Saline County	Bruntz Farms Inc.	157.52	Pioneer	85P75
1st	South Dakota	Bon Homme County	William Chenoweth	136.42	Pioneer	88P71
1st	Texas	Dallam County	K&M Farms	240.01	Pioneer	85P75
2nd	Texas	Hutchinson County	Will Jarvis	168.76	Pioneer	85P75
3rd	Texas	Medina County	Stinson & Stinson Inc.	128.38	DEKALB	DKS44-07

IRRIGATED EAST

1st	Delaware	Sussex County	Kenneth Stevenson II	148.98	DEKALB	DKS51-01
1st	New Jersey	Warren County	Chris Santini	190.35	Pioneer	85P58
2nd	New Jersey	Hunterdon County	Robert Santini	176.39	Pioneer	85P58
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton County	Howie D	156.73	Pioneer	85P75

DRYLAND-NO TILL WEST

1st	Colorado	Kiowa County	Britten Farms	133.38	Dyna-Gro	M26GC23
2nd	Colorado	Kit Carson County	Livingston Farms	107.37	Pioneer	88P71
3rd	Colorado	Kit Carson County	Farms S Inc	91.51	DEKALB	DKS29-28
1st	Kansas	Kiowa County	Gamble Farms LLC	172.80	Pioneer	85P44
2nd	Kansas	Marshall County	Duever Farms LLC	150.62	Pioneer	84P94
3rd	Kansas	Decatur County	Lone Pine Family Farms LLC - Matthew Stevenson	135.28	Channel	5R45
1st	Nebraska	Harlan County	Alma Ag Supply LLC	183.10	Pioneer	85Y88
2nd	Nebraska	Pawnee County	Mark Bloss	158.65	Pioneer	84P72
3rd	Nebraska	Harlan County	Rope Creek Ranch LLC	157.64	Pioneer	85Y88
1st	Oklahoma	Kingfisher County	Vilhauer Farms	132.41	DEKALB	DKS 44-07
2nd	Oklahoma	Comanche County	Wyatt Land & Cattle	94.24	DEKALB	DKS37-07
1st	South Dakota	Charles Mix County	Dylan Knoll	192.05	Pioneer	88P71
2nd	South Dakota	Charles Mix County	David Knoll	188.65	Pioneer	89Y79
3rd	South Dakota	Charles Mix County	Curt Soulek	157.43	Pioneer	89P52

PLACE	STATE	COUNTY	NAME	YIELD (BU/AC)	SEED BRAND	VARIETY
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DRYLAND-TILLAGE EAST

1st	Delaware	Kent County	Three Sisters Equipment LLC	132.20	Pioneer	86G32
1st	Illinois	Clark County	Williams Bros Farms LLC	199.48	DEKALB	DKS38-16
2nd	Illinois	Clark County	Walters Farms	177.24	DEKALB	DKS38-16
3rd	Illinois	Clark County	Allen K Walters	151.47	Pioneer	86P20
1st	Indiana	Daviess County	Steven Halter	151.77	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Missouri	Mercer County	Galt Porter	223.68	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Missouri	Audrain County	Aime Cummins	187.51	DEKALB	DKS54-07
3rd	Missouri	Audrain County	Andrew Cummins	185.21	Pioneer	85P58
1st	New Jersey	Warren County	Jeffrey Barlieb	225.18	Pioneer	85P58
2nd	New Jersey	Warren County	Carly Barlieb	197.54	Pioneer	85P58
3rd	New Jersey	Warren County	Sharon Santini	174.19	Pioneer	85P58
1st	New York	Oneida County	Bob Pawlowski	153.73	Channel	5R45
1st	North Carolina	Davidson County	Billy H Bowers Farm Trust	213.25	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton County	Howard A DeShong	154.81	Pioneer	85P75

DRYLAND-TILLAGE WEST

1st	Kansas	Washington County	Stewart Family Farms LLC	183.05	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Nebraska	Pawnee County	Matthew J Bloss	131.88	Pioneer	84P72
1st	Oklahoma	Texas County	Roger and Marilyn Fischer	108.78	Pioneer	86P20

DRYLAND-NO TILL EAST

1st	Delaware	Kent County	Skylar Larimore	158.19	Pioneer	84G62
2nd	Delaware	Sussex County	Fred Daley	152.74	DEKALB	DKS51-01
3rd	Delaware	Kent County	Three Sisters Equipment LLC	139.15	Pioneer	86G32
1st	Missouri	Livingston County	HRB Farming Partnership - Ben Beetsma	195.49	DEKALB	DKS54-07
2nd	Missouri	Livingston County	HRB Farming Partnership - Brad Beetsma	179.68	DEKALB	DKS54-07
1st	New Jersey	Warren County	Santino Santini Jr.	181.49	Pioneer	85P58
2nd	New Jersey	Warren County	Michelle Santini	163.07	Pioneer	85P58
3rd	New Jersey	Warren County	Promise Land Farms LLC	155.44	Pioneer	85P58
1st	New York	Oneida County	Mark Pawlowski	143.66	Channel	5R45
1st	North Carolina	Davidson County	Billy H Bowers Farm Trust	209.73	Pioneer	84G62
1st	Pennsylvania	Fulton County	Howard Deshong	153.02	Pioneer	85P75
2nd	Pennsylvania	Northumberland County	Mark M. Kieffer & Son, Inc.	148.22	Pioneer	86P20
1st	Virginia	King William County	Rob Kelley	103.35	DEKALB	DKS38-16



NEWSLETTER

sorghumcheckoff.com | Winter Edition 2025

Sorghum and Millet – Close Cousins?

By Sorghum Checkoff Agronomy Director Brent Bean, Ph.D.

Recently, I was asked by a fellow Sorghum Checkoff staff member if sorghum was considered a millet. My answer generated a considerable amount of interest, not only from the person who asked the question, but also from other staff members as well.

The short answer is no, sorghum is not a millet! This raises the question of just how closely they are related and why the two crops are lumped together on social media and other outlets.

To answer the first question, we need to take a dive into what is called taxonomy – the scientific study of identifying, naming and grouping of organisms based on their shared characteristics. Most of you, at some point in school, were introduced to the Linnaeus system with the general categories going from very broad to very specific: Kingdom – Phylum – Class – Order – Family – Tribe – Genus – Species. All grasses are in the Poaceae family. Sorghum and millet actually diverge early on and are in different subfamily groups. Surprisingly, sorghum is more closely related to corn because they are both in the same tribe.

From an origin standpoint,

sorghum originated in Africa, where millet has multiple origins across Africa and Asia. These origins have shaped the grains' abilities to adapt to different regions.

So why are sorghum and millet often tied together on social media, in popular articles and sometimes even in scientific publications? The easy answer is that they simply look a lot alike. Even an experienced agronomist can have trouble telling them apart from any significant distance. Their height can be similar, and both produce grain panicles. However, the grain of millet is considerably smaller than that of sorghum. Up close, each crop has very distinct characteristics.

Another reason they are often grouped together is they are both known for their resilience to harsh environmental conditions, particularly drought and high temperatures, making them both suitable for dryland farming in semi-arid regions. They are traditionally grown in subsistence farming systems, especially in Africa and parts of Asia. Due to their adaptability, sorghum and millet reduce the risk of crop failure in dry climates, supporting food security and resilience against climate

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Sorghum Checkoff Celebrates the Addition of New Sorghum Forms to USDA's FoodData Central



change. Both are considered ancient grains.

A final similarity between the two species is that they are considered dual-purpose crops. The grain is used for both animal and human consumption, while the rest of the plant can be fed to livestock as hay or grazed.

In summary, sorghum and millet, like all grasses, are related. However, purely from a classification standpoint, they are very distant cousins who happen to have evolved to be able to grow and thrive in similar environments.

Resilience and Opportunity in the Face of Change: Navigating the China-Brazil Sorghum Agreement

By John Duff, Sorghum Checkoff Consultant, Serō Ag Strategies

Much has been said about the recent China-Brazil sorghum export agreement. It's no secret that this deal has raised concerns about the long-term impact on U.S. farmers. Any shift in market dynamics—whether through lost access or a competitor gaining ground—affects farmers of all crops. U.S. agriculture is interconnected, and reliance on diverse crop mixes often serves as a critical tool to weather challenges such as drought, fluctuating prices and sustainability needs.

While some view this agreement as a signal of impending challenges for U.S. sorghum, it's important to keep a balanced perspective. First, U.S. sorghum remains essential to meeting China's growing demand, particularly for high-value uses like baijiu production and livestock feed. This fact underscores the critical need to maintain strong sorghum acreage to support this demand.

Second, the threat posed by the agreement is more significant in the long term. While the headlines may paint a bleak picture, Brazil currently lacks the capacity to export sorghum at the scale of the U.S. Historically, Brazil's sorghum production has played a supplementary role, often serving as a backup crop planted after corn planting windows have closed. To match U.S. export volumes, Brazil would need a significant overhaul of its sorghum industry, which is unlikely in the short term.

Meanwhile, the United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) has rolled up its sleeves and is diligently working to diversify market opportunities and expand awareness of sorghum's unique attributes worldwide. Beyond China, U.S. sorghum is gaining traction in high-value markets like aquaculture, pet food, sustainable feed and low carbon fuel applications. These efforts ensure the U.S. remains the world's leading and most reliable suppli-

er of export-ready sorghum, known globally for its unmatched quality and grade.

Moreover, U.S. farmers benefit from a highly developed transportation and logistics infrastructure, giving them a competitive edge over countries like Brazil. With an extensive network of well-maintained roads and railways, U.S. sorghum producers can ensure fast, dependable delivery to international markets. This robust infrastructure plays a key role in sustaining global trade and meeting market demands efficiently.

China has undoubtedly been a vital partner for U.S. sorghum, offering premiums above corn prices and driving extraordinary export volumes. But it's important to remember that sorghum's success predates China's dominance in the market. Over a decade ago, U.S. sorghum supported domestic markets, such as livestock and ethanol production, while maintaining a foothold in international trade. Those markets, though less lucrative than today's Chinese premiums, highlight sorghum's versatility and adaptability.

As we look ahead, the choice is clear: We can dwell on the challenges or focus on the opportunities. At the USCP, we choose to serve farmers by developing relationships, expanding knowledge and advocating for market access. By identifying and cultivating emerging markets, we're fostering a sustainable future for sorghum producers.

Sorghum Checkoff Elects Ethan Miller as New Chairman and Swears in New Board Member



The Sorghum Checkoff Board of Directors elected new leadership and swore in a new director at its December meeting. Pictured from left to right is Tim Lust - CEO, David Schemm - Secretary, Kim Baldwin - Vice Chairwoman, Ethan Miller - Chairman, Norma Ritz Johnson - Executive Director and Zack Rendel - Treasurer.

One new board member appointed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack was sworn in, and three other producers began their second terms after reappointment by Secretary Vilsack during the United Sorghum Checkoff Program's annual December meeting. The board also elected Ethan Miller of Columbia, Missouri, as the 2025 chairman.

Past Chairman Adam Schindler of Reliance, South Dakota, was recognized for his dedicated service as he concluded his term on the USCP Board.

"I am honored to take on the role of Chairman and continue driving innovation and opportunities for sorghum producers," said Miller. "Our industry's resilience and adaptability are key to unlocking sorghum's potential, and I look forward to working alongside this exceptional team to advance our mission."

The newly elected USCP Executive Committee and newly appointed or reappointed Board Members include:

Executive Committee

- Chair: Ethan Miller, Columbia, Missouri
- Vice Chair: Kim Baldwin, McPherson, Kansas
- Secretary: David Schemm, Sharon Springs, Kansas

- Treasurer: Zack Rendel, Miami, Oklahoma
- Newly Appointed Board Members
 - Dale L. Stoltzfus, Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania (At-Large)

Reappointed Board Members to Second Terms

- Macey A. Mueller, Halstead, Kansas
- Kim Baldwin, McPherson, Kansas
- Kevin Pshigoda, Perryton, Texas

"USCP continues to thrive because of the dedication of our producers and leaders who work tirelessly to support the sorghum industry," said USCP Executive Director Norma Ritz Johnson. "This Board represents a wealth of experience and vision that will help us navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead."

The newly appointed and reappointed directors will serve terms ending in December 2027. The 13-member USCP Board is composed of nine sorghum farmers representing the largest sorghum-producing states—Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas—and four at-large representatives from across the nation.

For more information about the USCP Board and its initiatives, visit sorghumcheckoff.com.



Adam Schindler Completes Sorghum Checkoff Board Term

The Sorghum Checkoff would like to thank Adam Schindler for his years of commitment and hard work in the sorghum industry. Adam Schindler, a sixth-generation farmer from Reliance, South Dakota, served two terms on the board and was a member of Leadership Sorghum Class I. He also led the USCP board as Chairman from 2022–2023.

Sorghum Checkoff Celebrates the Addition of New Sorghum Forms to USDA’s FoodData Central

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) announced in November that four new forms of sorghum have been officially added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s FoodData Central Database. This significant milestone ensures that the most up-to-date nutritional information on commonly used sorghum products is readily available to consumers and food companies amid growing demand for sorghum.

In collaboration with USCP, USDA collected samples from sorghum farms across the United States, gathered metadata and conducted nutrient analyses. The newly updated sorghum forms now available in FoodData Central are: whole grain, pearled grain, pearled flour and bran.

“This is a pivotal step in making sorghum information more accessible and understood by both consumers and the food industry,” said Lanier Dabruzzi, MS, RD, LD, director of nutrition & food innovation at Sorghum Checkoff. “We are excited about the potential growth this brings to the sorghum market.”

USCP will continue working with the USDA’s Methods and Application of Food Composition Laboratory (MAFCL) to include data on cooked grains and popped sorghum varieties.

Discover more about sorghum's nutrition at sorghumcheckoff.com/consumers.

SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

Jan 28-30 International Production & Processing Expo
Atlanta, Georgia

Mar 2-4 Leadership Sorghum Class VII – Session II
Denver, Colorado

Mar 2-4 2025 Commodity Classic
Denver, Colorado

For more events, visit sorghumcheckoff.com/calendar



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USCP MISSION

The Sorghum Checkoff commits to reveal the potential and versatility of sorghum through increased shared value.



Sorghum Update

Brought to you by the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

A Look Back at 2024: Recounting The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission's Impacts

By Maddy Meier

As 2024 draws to a close, the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission is reflecting on and will soon provide statutorily-required reporting to the Kansas Legislature about a year of strategic investments, information and educational initiatives, and continued promotion for the state's sorghum industry at home and abroad. From Commission engagement in selecting a new and talented sorghum breeder at Kansas State University for sorghum improvement to diversifying international market development, significant forward-looking efforts dotted this year benchmarking and showcasing the resilience and momentum of the Kansas sorghum sector.

Kicking off in January, K-State initiated a faculty search committee to select a new lead researcher to run our land grant institution's sorghum breeding program. Commission staff engaged frequently through the Spring and Summer with a dedicated seat on this committee in order to relate sorghum growers' stakeholder priorities for commercial translation and profitability outcomes tied to scientific research and breeding program direction; and, the Commission congratulates Dr. Terry Felderhoff—no stranger to the Commission and a top talent in the field of sorghum trait identification and genomics-assisted breeding techniques—in his selection to lead the program into the future.

A major highlight of 2024 was the launch of the Sorghum Connection Series, a new initiative aimed at providing Kansas sorghum producers with up-to-date research and practical insights to enhance productivity. In partnership with Kansas State University Research and Extension and K-State's Plant Pathology Department, the Commission held a series of field days across Central and Western Kansas. More than 20 hybrids were tested, and the events offered hands-on experiences with researchers and industry experts.

In October, the U.S. Grains Council hosted Export Exchange in Fort Worth, Texas, where foreign buyers from more than 50 countries explored U.S. grains, with sorghum taking prominent stage in discussions on global market trends and feed demand abroad. U.S. sorghum, with half its production in Kansas, is recognized globally for its superior quality, making it the top choice for, livestock feed, ethanol, and baijiu, a culturally significant alcohol in China. As China's demand grows, particularly for Baijiu and feed, U.S. sorghum remains a reliable supplier, ensuring consistent, timely deliveries. As the largest source of export-ready sorghum, the U.S. helps maintain stability in global markets.

After the event, the Council and Kansas Sorghum hosted a Chinese trade delegation in Western Kansas to showcase sorghum's diverse uses. The group visited WindRiver Grain, Bonanza Energy, Vulgamore Family Farms, and Nu Life Market. While China remains a major buyer, the Commission is also targeting new markets, including India's growing population. In November, a trade delegation from India participated in a short course at Kansas State University coordinated by your sorghum organizations on grain sorghum's role in poultry rations, milling, and storage, opening new opportunities for U.S. sorghum exports.

In December, the Commission wrapped up the Sorghum Connection Winter Series, diving deeper into key topics from the fall field days. Held in Salina, Hays, and Garden City, the series featured speakers on effective weed management, sorghum's potential in the pet food industry, and market outlooks, ensuring Kansas farmers remained on the cutting edge of industry trends.

Earlier in the Fall, the Commission approved its annual budget for Fiscal Year 2025. The upcoming year's budget prioritizes investments in areas that will boost the profitability and sustainability of the sorghum industry over the next decade. While investment highlights include advancing molecular sorghum breeding programs, expanding domestic and international market development, and supporting educational and promotional efforts mentioned above, another long-term investment over a decade in the making will support strategic match opportunities necessary to continue and expand the Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program (CSIP). Created in 2016, CSIP stands as the U.S. sorghum industry's signature sorghum improvement platform and a battle-tested public-private partnership between the Commission, the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, K-State, and the State of Kansas.

As 2024 concludes, the Commission continues its work to support the industry and the growers it represents. From leadership transitions and strategic investments to groundbreaking educational initiatives and international outreach, the Commission and its staff have worked feverishly to strengthen the sorghum industry in Kansas and across the region. Looking forward to 2025, the Commission remains dedicated to advancing the state's sorghum industry and ensuring its success in an increasingly competitive global market.

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2024 NSP YIELD CONTEST RESULTS

RANK	WINNER	COUNTY, STATE	PIONEER® BRAND PRODUCT	YIELD (BU/A)
WESTERN IRRIGATED TILLAGE				
1ST	K&M FARMS* <i>*2024 NSP BIN BUSTER AWARD RECIPIENT</i>	DALLAM, TEXAS	85P75	240.01
3RD	ORMISTON FARMS	SEWARD, KANSAS	85P75	185.17
EASTERN IRRIGATED TILLAGE				
1ST	CHRIS SANTINI	WARREN, NEW JERSEY	85P58	190.35
2ND	ROBERT SANTINI	HUNTERDON, NEW JERSEY	85P58	176.39
3RD	HOWIE D	FULTON, PENNSYLVANIA	85P75	156.73
WESTERN DRYLAND-NO TILL				
1ST	DYLAN KNOLL	CHARLES MIX, SOUTH DAKOTA	88P71	192.05
2ND	DAVID KNOLL	CHARLES MIX, SOUTH DAKOTA	89Y79	188.65
3RD	ALMA AG SUPPLY LLC	HARLAN, NEBRASKA	85Y88	183.10
EASTERN DRYLAND-NO TILL				
1ST	BILLY H BOWERS FARM TRUST	DAVIDSON, NORTH CAROLINA	84G62	209.73
3RD	SANTINO SANTINI JR.	WARREN, NEW JERSEY	85P58	181.49
WESTERN DRYLAND-TILLAGE				
1ST	STEWART FAMILY FARMS LLC	WASHINGTON, KANSAS	84G62	183.05
2ND	MATTHEW J BLOSS	PAWNEE, NEBRASKA	84P72	131.88
3RD	ROGER AND MARILYN FISCHER	TEXAS, OKLAHOMA	86P20	108.78
EASTERN DRYLAND - TILLAGE				
1ST	JEFFREY BARLIEB	WARREN, NEW JERSEY	85P58	225.18
2ND	GALT PORTER	MERCER, MISSOURI	84G62	223.68



For the full list of winners, visit pioneer.com/NSP



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