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House Subcommittee Sets Sorghum Loan Rate Equal to Corn on the County Level

At the markup of the 2007 Farm Bill in the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, Representative Nancy Boyda of Kansas offered an amendment to equalize the county loan rate for corn and grain sorghum. The amendment was accepted as a provision after the proposed cuts to the sorghum safety net were not agreed to and the Subcommittee replaced the proposed commodity title with the current farm program. The bill is expected to be marked up after the July 4th recess by the full House Agriculture Committee.

"Sorghum growers appreciate the leadership demonstrated by Representative Boyda," said National Sorghum Producers President Dale Murden of Monte Alto, Texas. "She knows the positive impact that the change will have on sorghum producers."

NSP Past President Greg Shelor of Minneola, Kan. added that producers value the continuing support of his Member of Congress. "Ranking Member Jerry Moran has played an important role in helping USDA to understand how sorghum is priced. NSP also wishes to thank Texas Representatives Randy Neugebauer and Michael Conaway for their support and work on behalf of sorghum growers."

During the business meeting, Moran thanked Boyda for taking leadership on the loan rate issue. "I support the concept and motivation behind the change," he said. Moran was instrumental in equalizing the national sorghum and corn loan rates in the 2002 Farm Bill.

Neugebauer said that the change is beneficial to sorghum growers in Texas. "It is particularly important because sorghum and corn can both be used to make ethanol."

To ensure proper implementation, Conaway confirmed with Subcommittee Chairman Bob Etheridge that operational guidelines would be in place at USDA to implement the change as Boyda proposed.

Yesterday, NSP sent a letter to Subcommittee Chairman Bob Etheridge outlining sorghum's priorities, which also included a strong safety net of direct payments.

NSP represents U.S. sorghum producers. Headquartered in Lubbock, Texas, in the heart of the U.S. Sorghum Belt that stretches from the Rockies to the Mississippi River and from South Texas to South Dakota, the organization works to ensure the profitability of sorghum production through market development, research, education and legislative representation. To learn more about NSP, visit www.sorghumgrowers.com.