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Why I support the Sorghum Checkoff

Ag Blogs - Kendall Hodgson
Wednesday, 23 February 2011 14:58



Editors note: Voting for the sorghum checkoff runs through the end of February.

My name is Kendall Hodgson and I farm and ranch at Little River, Kansas. I raise the typical crops suited for central Kansas such as wheat, milo, corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

The percentage of each crop on my farm has changed over the years. Our tillage practices have changed, the potential for profit has changed as well as our understanding of what a proper rotation among those crops should be. I am a past board member and president of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers so I know something about advocacy for a particular commodity. Of the crops I produce the one that has gotten the least amount of attention or respect is milo or sorghum. Knowing that we need a sorghum crop in our rotation I have agreed to help with the Sorghum Vote Yes campaign (www.voteyessorghum.com).

What this is about, is that three years ago a national check off was initiated to better coordinate research, development and marketing of sorghum products and now we need to renew that check off. Sorghum really hasn't gotten a lot of respect in the last few years and has lost acres to corn and other crops. This is an attempt to really get something going to keep sorghum a viable crop in our area.

Several years ago my friend Michael Jordon from Beloit said his two best varieties were so old that one was old enough to drink and the other was old enough to drive. It was a great quote that really pointed out that we need to get more research into new and better ways of producing sorghum. We also need more research into new products as well as developing new markets. If you compare the amount of money any other business would spend on research, development and marketing of their product with our commodity check offs, you would say that farmers are grossly underfunding that part of their business.

There is an insurance cooperative association that has the word union in its name that has come out against the check off because they think it take too much money out of the county. Do they think that research, development and marketing are going to be done separately in each county? I thought union meant working together. All a producer has to do is take a sorghum grain or silage sales receipt to the FSA office to show that they did produce sorghum and vote yes. I will finish with my most inflammatory statement yet. If someone isn't willing to support a commodity they don't deserve to produce it.

Kendall Hodgson farms and ranches at Little River, Kansas.

Market snapshot

May Futures		
Wheat	810-2s	-6-6
KC Wheat	910-0s	-2-0
Corn	735-4s	+4-4
Soybeans	1375-2s	+10-4
Oats	389-4s	+8-4
Ethanol	2.582s	+0.016
Lx Cattle (April)	113.600s	-1.050
Lean Hogs	97.300s	-0.800
Pork Bellies	108.700s	0.000

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