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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

USDA Extends DCP, Counter-cyclical and ACRE Sign-Up Deadline

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced this week that USDA has extended the sign-up deadline from June 1, to Aug. 14, 2009, for both the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the forthcoming Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. This action extends the sign-up deadline by 10 weeks to give producers ample time to decide whether to participate in ACRE or remain in DCP.

"Extending the DCP and ACRE sign-up deadline will help ensure that America's farmers have enough information and time to determine whether to participate in the ACRE Program. The DCP and ACRE programs play a critical role in the farm safety net and it is vital that we act to support the hard work of the farmers we depend on," Vilsack said.

Sign-up for ACRE is expected to start in late April, with an official sign-up announcement to be made in the coming weeks. Producers can elect ACRE at their FSA county office after the sign-up period commences. The original June 1 deadline may have forced producers to rush their decision, which is why this extension gives producers more time to make an informed decision about staying with DCP for 2009 or participating in ACRE for crop year 2009 and beyond through 2012. (*USDA press release*)

NASS Prospective Plantings Released

The National Ag Statistics Service this week released its annual crop prospective planting projections for the 2009 crop season. Their report indicates that sorghum planted acres will fall to 6.9 million acres from 2008's 8.2 million acres. However, early projections are often inaccurate as moisture and price swings can significantly alter actual crop acreage.

Rep. Sandlin & Rep. Shimkus write letter for Higher Ethanol Blends

Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD) and Rep. John Shimkus (D-IL) wrote to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson last week, urging ethanol-gasoline blend limits to be raised to E-15.

The letter read, "The current 10 percent ethanol-gasoline blending cap threatens to restrict the development of ethanol infrastructure and capacity. Ultimately, it will restrain the development of advanced biofuels, and therefore our nation's ability to meet the historic Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) enacted in the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act."

An increase in ethanol blends from E-10 to E-15 will help keep ethanol plants running and create jobs across the nation when our economy needs them most. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) assures that an increase in ethanol blends can be used in standard vehicles and does not raise tailpipe emission or decrease mileage. Rep. Sandlin and Rep. Shimkus believe the raise in ethanol blends from E-10 to E-15 will strengthen energy security and help diversify the nation's fuel supply.

Vilsack Names Michener Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator

On Monday, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack named Michael Michener as Administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). "I am extremely pleased to have someone with Mike's vast foreign affairs experience on my team," said Vilsack. "In addition to its efforts to expand economic opportunities for U.S. agriculture in the international marketplace, FAS also plays a vital role in international food aid and development programs."

In the past ten years, Michener has served on three U.S. Foreign affairs agencies. While spending time overseas promoting human rights, economic development and post-conflict stability operations, he most recently served as the

Senior Democracy Governance Advisor and Lead Planning Officer for the U.S. State Department's Office. From 2005 to 2007, he served as lead Iraq policy officer for the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, managing nearly \$400 million in assistance programs.

Attention Sorghum Researchers

The USDA-ARS is now shipping sorghum association panels, both elite and converted lines, to sorghum researchers interested in evaluating these lines. These lines were selected so that researchers could begin to look for gene associations, and with the release of the sorghum genome, these panels will be important in new research for gene discovery and function in sorghum. All panel accessions are labeled in GRIN with secondary identifiers as "SAP-number." If you are interested in these panels, please go to www.ars-grin.gov and search for the SAP numbers.

CRB Launches Ethanol Outlook Report for CME Group

The Commodity Research Bureau (CRB) has announced the launch of a new research report focused on the ethanol market. The weekly report, named CME Group Ethanol Outlook Report, is published by CRB each Monday.

The report provides comprehensive global ethanol market information and data to the ethanol, energy and agricultural industries, as well as ethanol market participants. Each week the report includes ethanol market overviews, related news and headlines, in addition to ethanol data, charts and related events. Find more information at www.cmegroup.com/ethanoloutlook.

Inhofe Introduces Farm Truck Weight Legislation

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK) recently re-introduced bipartisan legislation with Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Tom Coburn (R-OK) to address a problem faced by a number of farmers and ranchers around the country when they drive their goods across state lines.

Farmers are driving trucks loaded with goods that are within their state's requirements. But as soon as they cross state lines, they may be violating other state's weight requirements and are being ticketed.

According to Senator Inhofe (R-OK), many are searching for a solution to the arbitrary federal law. This is the first step in reducing the inconvenience to farmers and allowing them to transport their commodities to competitive markets without unreasonable regulations.

Senator Inhofe only wants an exemption for farmers and ranchers who drive very few miles to get their products to markets across state lines. This would not be in effect for "road haulers".

About Sorghum Notes

SORGHUM Notes is a publication of the National Sorghum Producers. NSP represents U.S. sorghum producers. The organization serves as the voice of the sorghum industry from coast to coast through education and legislative and regulatory representation. To learn more about NSP visit our website at www.sorghumgrowers.com. Write to us at National Sorghum Producers, 4201 N Interstate 27, Lubbock, TX 79403. *To unsubscribe to Sorghum Notes, please reply to hannah@sorghumgrowers.com.* If you have questions about the sorghum industry or the National Sorghum Producers, please do not hesitate to call NSP at (800) 658-9808.

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Quote of the Week:

"Be the change you want to see in the world."
-- Mohandas Gandhi

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