

SORGHUM E-Notes

April 23, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

You Can Still Plant a Second Crop!

After a damaging freeze in recent weeks, some producers have received confusing information about their ability to maintain Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) payments if they plant a second crop behind failed wheat. The National Sorghum Producers (NSP) worked with Congress during the 2008 farm bill debate to make sure that uninsured sorghum planted behind an insured, failed, first crop would not negate a producer's eligibility for crop insurance payments on the first crop.

Some producers have been told that planting a second crop behind wheat may affect eligibility for SURE if their wheat had already headed out before a freeze. However, a producer planting a second crop behind the failed wheat crop (regardless of the growth stage of the wheat) will be considered a "ghost crop" and *will be* eligible for SURE under two circumstances:

1. If the producer listed sorghum on their insurance policy – remember no premium is due unless you actually insure acreage.
2. If the producer had purchased NAP on the second crops. FSA has confirmed that a "liberal equitable relief policy" will be in effect for 2009 given the late freeze on wheat.

Producers who did not indicate on their insurance forms that they might plant another crop besides wheat will be at the mercy of this "liberal equitable relief policy." It is still unclear whether producers will be eligible for SURE if they plant a second crop and did not indicate the intent to do so.

If producers have sorghum – or another crop – listed on their policy, then they are safe under SURE and should have no problems. Producers should plant the second crop, and FSA will work with them on an individual basis. However, a producer that takes wheat to harvest then plants a second crop will truly be looking at a "double crop" situation and not a "ghost crop."

An NSP press release from earlier in the season is linked [here](#) and reflects this information. If you have questions about your specific situation, give us a call at (800) 658-9808.

Spillman Talks Crop Insurance with House Agriculture Subcommittee

The National Sorghum Producers was well-represented yesterday by Jarrod Spillman of Hoxie, Kansas at a hearing regarding the functionality of crop insurance programs. The hearing, held by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, convened to review the effectiveness of crop insurance for producers. Spillman testified on behalf of NSP along with representatives from the wheat, cotton, nursery and landscape, rice, corn and sugar industries.

Spillman particularly addressed inconsistencies in the methods that the Risk Management Agency (RMA) uses to set price elections for grain sorghum in his five-minute oral testimony.

“If we can get RMA to come up with a price election methodology that can make sorghum price competitive to producers such as myself, then we may see a shift in acreage back to sorghum,” Spillman said. “This shift needs to occur, especially in the semi-arid parts of the country. Doing so will ultimately conserve our water table, provide more grain because we are planting a viable crop, and provide the mulch needed in the Plains states to keep our precious soil where it belongs.”

After oral testimony, Spillman answered questions about the effectiveness of a 2008 farm bill provision that was championed by NSP. The provision requires that RMA re-evaluate the way grain sorghum price elections are set. Following Spillman's answers, Congressman Jim Marshall, (D-GA), who served as chair of yesterday's hearing, pledged to work with other members to send a letter to USDA requesting further information about RMA's fulfillment of farm bill requirements.

Spillman, a sorghum, wheat, corn, soybean, sunflower and cow-calf producer, farms in Sheridan County, Kansas. [Written and oral testimonies](#) are available on our website.

Caruso Appointed to Farm Service Agency Role

Doug Caruso, a dairy industry executive from Wisconsin and former aide to Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) was appointed deputy administrator of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the appointment on Wednesday.

“As FSA State Executive Director in Wisconsin for eight years, Doug Caruso compiled an impressive record of improving client services and enhancing outreach to historically underserved farmers,” Vilsack said. “He is the right choice to serve America's farmers, ranchers, rural landowners and communities that benefit from FSA's services and to implement USDA's goals of providing a safety net for small and mid-sized farmers while promoting a sustainable, safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply.”

The position of FSA Administrator is particularly important to American farmers and ranchers because the FSA administers farm commodity, credit, disaster, loan and conservation programs. Caruso's position does not require Senate confirmation.

Sorghum Foundation Scholarships Awarded, Nominations Open

The [National Grain Sorghum Producers Foundation](#) has awarded scholarships to students from the University of Nebraska and Texas Tech University for the 2008-2009 academic year. Additionally, the NSP-Maunders Kansas State University Center for Sorghum Improvement Scholarship has been awarded to Elyse Buckley, a Food Science major from Chanute, Kansas.

“We honor these outstanding students as well as the many donors who recognize that our future in the sorghum industry depends on these most deserving recipients,” says Bruce Maunders, NSP Research Advisor and President of the National Grain Sorghum Producers Foundation.

Information on the Foundation or the Kansas State University Center Scholarship may be obtained by contacting Dr. Jeff Dahlberg or Bruce Maunders at (800) 658-9808. Donations for 2009 may be sent to the National Sorghum Producers Foundation, attention Bruce Maunders, 4201 N. Interstate 27, Lubbock, Texas 79403.

The Foundation is also currently accepting applications and nominations for the 2009-2010 academic year scholarships. Email [Jeff Dahlberg](#) or [Bruce Maunders](#) for more information. Many thanks go to the generous supporters who make this scholarship program possible.

NSP Featured on Our Planet Television Series

The National Sorghum Producers will be highlighted on an upcoming segment of the [Our Planet](#) television series, a syndicated program, hosted by Greg Gumbel, which runs on [major news outlets](#) such as MSNBC, Fox Business Network, CNN, and the Discovery Channel as well as regional carriers.

Our Planet contacted NSP last fall to arrange a program segment about the growing sorghum-to-ethanol market. NSP began work with Our Planet to create a top quality educational outreach tool that could benefit sorghum markets nationwide. The segment focuses on grain, sweet and forage sorghum for ethanol production. NSP would like to thank the Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Association, the Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association and the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers Association for their partnership which helped make the segment possible.

Watch for the segment to appear on regional and national television networks in coming months. In the mean time, you can view the segment on the front page of NSP's website at www.sorghumgrowers.com. Mouse over the video to view play, pause or stop controls.

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:

"There is nothing more uncommon than common sense."
-- Frank Lloyd Wright

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