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SORGHUM E-Notes

January 29, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:
the voice of the sorghum industry

USCP Board Holds Meeting

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program Board of Directors is meeting this week in Kansas City. This meeting marks their second formal meeting since the Secretary of Agriculture appointed the Board in November, although they have met monthly by conference call. Details and an agenda are available at www.sorghumcheckoff.com.

Sorghum Genome Sequence Published

Scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Joint Genome Institute (JGI) and several partner institutions have published the sequence and analysis of the complete genome of sorghum. The genome data will aid scientists in optimizing sorghum and other crops not only for food and fodder use, but also for biofuels production. The comparative analysis of the sorghum genome appears in the January 29 edition of the journal *Nature*.

"This is an important step on the road to the development of cost-effective biofuels made from nonfood plant fiber," said Anna C. Palmisano, DOE Associate Director of Science for Biological and Environmental Research. "Sorghum is an excellent candidate for biofuels production, with its ability to withstand drought and prosper on more marginal land. The fully sequenced genome will be an indispensable tool for researchers seeking to develop plant variants that maximize these benefits."

"NSP is thrilled that sorghum is the second cereal crop to have its genome sequenced," said Tim Lust, NSP CEO. "We applaud the efforts of the DOE Joint Genome Institute to have this sequence completed and look forward to the advances that this accomplishment will bring to producers' fields. Sequencing the sorghum genome will open countless doors to improve grain yields, ethanol yields and move even more quickly to open new markets for sorghum crops. I am confident that this achievement will insure the continued productivity and profitability of sorghum, not only for U.S. sorghum producers, but for farmers worldwide."

The sorghum sequencing project was initiated in 2005 under the auspices of DOE JGI's Community Sequencing Program (CSP), funded by the Office of Biological and Environmental Research within the DOE Office of Science.

Food Companies Bribed to Keep Prices Up?

The Associated Press reported this week that employees of Kraft foods and Frito Lay have pled guilty to price fixing and bribery in association with schemes to drive up food prices over the past several years. At both companies, high level purchasing agents have confessed to working with a sales broker to allow the broker to charge higher prices for products sold to Kraft and Frito Lay. The price fixing was done in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes.

This particular accusation comes at a time when food companies are being scrutinized by ethanol groups for their high prices. The food industry, particularly the Grocery Manufacturers Association, launched a PR campaign to place blame on the ethanol industry for rising food prices last summer. However, since grain prices have retreated from their summer levels, grocery prices have not.

Census on Agriculture to be Released

The long-awaited results of U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census of Agriculture will be released next Wednesday, February 4, 2009. Census results will be available online at www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Vilsack Extends Comment Period on Farm Bill

According to a USDA press release, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced this week that he will extend the comment period for the 2008 Farm Bill Farm Program Payment Limitation and Payment Eligibility rulemaking process. Vilsack discussed his priorities as Secretary of Agriculture during a teleconference call with agriculture and other reporters across the country and said that as part of the regulatory review process outlined by the White House and Office of Management and Budget, he is directing the Department to extend the comment period for the payment limits rule for an additional 60 days.

Agriculture Committee Meets to Address Business Issues

Members of the House Agriculture Committee met yesterday to organize the Committee and adopt the Committee's rules for the 111th Congress. The Committee rules approved yesterday are similar to the rules adopted by the Committee during the 110th Congress. One addition to the Committee rules provides that the results of all recorded votes in the Agriculture Committee will be posted on the Committee's website within two days of the vote.

The committee also ratified the members and leadership of all six subcommittees. Agriculture Committee Chair Collin C. Peterson (MN) and Ranking Minority Member Frank D. Lucas (OK) serve as ex officio Members of all subcommittees.

Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research

Rep. Tim Holden, PA, Chair	Rep. Walt Minnick, ID
Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, SD	Rep. Earl Pomeroy, ND
Rep. Deborah L. Halvorson, IL	Vacancy
Rep. Kathleen A. Dahlkemper, PA	Rep. Bob Goodlatte, VA, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Betsy Markey, CO	Rep. Jerry Moran, KS
Rep. Mark H. Schauer, MI	Rep. Sam Graves, MO
Rep. Larry Kissell, NC	Rep. Mike Rogers, AL
Rep. John A. Boccieri, OH	Rep. Steve King, IA
Rep. Mike McIntyre, NC	Rep. Randy Neugebauer, TX
Rep. Jim Costa, CA	Rep. Jean Schmidt, OH
Rep. Brad Ellsworth, IN	Rep. Adrian Smith, NE
Rep. Timothy J. Walz, MN	Rep. Robert E. Latta, OH
Rep. Eric J.J. Massa, NY	Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer, MO
Rep. Bobby Bright, AL	Rep. Glenn Thompson, PA
Rep. Frank Kratovil, Jr., MD	Rep. Bill Cassidy, LA

Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry

Rep. Joe Baca, CA, Chair	Rep. Travis W. Childers, MS
Rep. Henry Cuellar, TX	Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, NE, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Steve Kagen, WI	Rep. Steve King, IA
Rep. Kurt Schrader, OR	Rep. Jean Schmidt, OH
Rep. Kathleen A. Dahlkemper, PA	vacancy

Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management

Rep. Leonard L. Boswell, IA, Chair	Rep. Jim Marshall, GA
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Rep. Brad Ellsworth, IN
Rep. Timothy J. Walz, MN
Rep. Kurt Schrader, OR
Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, SD
Rep. Betsy Markey, CO
Rep. Larry Kissell, NC
Rep. Deborah L. Halvorson, IL
Rep. Earl Pomeroy, ND

Rep. Travis W. Childers, MS
Rep. Jerry Moran, KS, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Timothy V. Johnson, IL
Rep. Sam Graves, MO
Rep. Steve King, IA
Rep. K. Michael Conaway, TX
Rep. Robert E. Latta, OH
Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer, MO

Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture

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Rep. Eric J.J. Massa, NY
Rep. Jim Costa, CA
Rep. Kurt Schrader, OR
Rep. Frank Kratovil, Jr., MD

vacancy
Rep. Jean Schmidt, OH, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Jerry Moran, KS
Rep. Timothy V. Johnson, IL
vacancy

Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry

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Rep. Jim Costa, CA
Rep. Steve Kagen, WI
Rep. Frank Kratovil, Jr., MD
Rep. Tim Holden, PA
Rep. Leonard L. Boswell, IA
Rep. Joe Baca, CA
Rep. Dennis A. Cardoza, CA
Rep. Betsy Markey, CO

Rep. Walt Minnick, ID
vacancy
Rep. Randy Neugebauer, TX, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Bob Goodlatte, VA
Rep. Mike Rogers, AL
Rep. Steve King, IA
Rep. K. Michael Conaway, TX
Rep. Adrian Smith, NE
Rep. David P. Roe, TN

Subcommittee on Rural Development, Biotechnology, Specialty Crops, and Foreign Agriculture

Rep. Mike McIntyre, NC, Chair
Rep. Bobby Bright, AL
Rep. Jim Marshall, GA
Rep. Henry Cuellar, TX
Rep. Larry Kissell, NC
Rep. Walt Minnick, ID

Rep. K. Michael Conaway, TX, Ranking Minority Member
Rep. David P. Roe, TN
Rep. Glenn Thompson, PA
Rep. Bill Cassidy, LA

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:

In Mexico we have a word for sushi: Bait.

-- Jose Simon

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