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SORGHUM E-Notes

March 5, 2009

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:
the voice of the sorghum industry

More Important than Ever: NSP Representing Farmers in D.C.

In the past week, Obama Administration officials have turned their attention to policy and have clarified the direction in which they would like the Department of Agriculture to proceed. Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack has stressed his commitment to implement Obama's proposal to increase nutrition programs by \$1 billion. Nutrition programs fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In remarks at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference, Vilsack commented, "Thirty million children, 90,000 farmers: That's the choice. That is the value statement that budgets are about." Vilsack has proposed funding new nutrition programs by ending support programs to farmers with more than \$500,000 in annual sales. He has also recommended replacing direct payments with environmental incentive payments. In the Des Moines Register, Vilsack was quoted as saying, "If you had a dollar - one dollar - where would you put it? Would you give it to a child for more nutritious eating? Would you give it in a direct payment to a high-income (farm) operation?"

The sorghum, wheat, corn and soybean industries responded to the budget proposal with a statement made from the Commodity Classic last week. "Production agriculture is a volatile business, and a workable farm safety net is vital to the security of our industry," they said. "The continued production of an abundant, affordable and safe food and feed supply for Americans and all those we export to around the world will be affected if this safety net is changed." To read the entire statement, visit our website's [Legislative Center](#).

NSP staff were in Washington, D.C. early this week to evaluate the environment and meet with Congressional leaders. Farmers have often been the first on the "budget chopping block" in D.C. and in times like these, it is extremely important to remind leaders that American farmers account for only two percent of the population but feed the other 98 percent. Farmers receive less than one quarter of one percent of the Federal budget in support payments.

Commodity Classic a Success!

The Commodity Classic held last week in Grapevine, Texas was a first-class event for farmers to connect with other farmers, learn new techniques they can put to work on their operations, and attend a large, diverse trade show. More growers attended Classic this year than last, with 1,513 total producers. Total attendance was 4,527 and Classic broke its record for the largest trade show in its 13-year history.

"While this first Classic was a learning experience for our organization, we felt like it was a beneficial event," said NSP Chairman of the Board Toby Bostwick. "I feel like sorghum's first opportunity to participate in the Commodity Classic was positive for our stakeholders and I am looking forward to next year's event in Anaheim."

Highlights for NSP included a breakfast honoring yield contest winners and a pre-Classic research meeting with the Sorghum Improvement Conference of North America. The Classic General Session included a fascinating conversation on stage among the four industry association presidents including Toby Bostwick, NSP Chairman of the Board. Subjects ranged from profitability to biofuels. The NSP booth was constantly abuzz with activity as growers stopped by to ask questions about their past and future sorghum crops.

To see photos of this year's event, [click here](#). Next year's Commodity Classic will be held in Anaheim, California March 4-6, 2010.

Canada Imports U.S. Sorghum

The U.S. Grains Council organized the sale of four railcars of South Dakota sorghum to Canada. The sale, approximately 360 metric tons or roughly 14,172 bushels of U.S. sorghum, was finalized last week. Dan Keefe, USGC manager of international operations for DDGS (distiller's dried grains with solubles), said this sale was not about quantity but more so about opportunity.

"Realistically, this is a small amount of U.S. sorghum but it is a great beginning," said Keefe who provided assistance in making the connections necessary for the sale to occur. "This is the initial step in getting greater quantities of U.S. grain sorghum to our northern neighbors. This is very similar to the story behind U.S. DDGS making headway in the Canadian marketplace. In 2003, 30,898 tons of U.S. DDGS were exported to Canada and now they are the second-largest buyer of the co-product, importing 771,797 tons in 2008."

Merrigan to be Nominated as New USDA Deputy Secretary

President Barack Obama has announced his intention to nominate Kathleen A. Merrigan to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Merrigan is currently an assistant professor and Director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment M.S. and Ph.D. Program at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston. In 1999, she was appointed administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service by then-President Clinton. Prior to that, Merrigan was a senior analyst at the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture and an expert consultant at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. From 1987 to 1992 she was a staff member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry where she helped develop the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 which mandated national organic standards and a program of federal accreditation.

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:

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the...field."
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower

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