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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:
the voice of the sorghum industry

Jobs Bill Could Include Disaster Assistance

Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Blanche Lincoln is pressing to add \$1.5 billion for farm disaster aid and assistance for weather-related catastrophes to an emerging \$80 billion-plus package of tax incentives for job creation and safety-net spending for the unemployed. This relief is especially vital for producers in the mid-south who lost crops to excessive moisture and those in south Texas who suffered severe drought last season.

The agriculture disaster package was originally introduced in November by the Arkansas and Mississippi Senate delegations. Reps. Marion Berry (D-AR) and Travis Childers (D-MS) in the House introduced a similar measure. An aide for Senator Lincoln said the proposal “would provide timely disaster assistance to farmers affected by heavy rains, floods and other weather-related disasters.”

The package would provide payments to producers who lost at least five percent of their crop in either quality or quantity. Producers would be eligible for disaster payment equal to 90 percent of their yearly direct payment.

Legislators had hoped to push the bill through by the end of the week, but record snowfall has basically shut down Washington, D.C. Even so, there are rumblings that behind-the-scenes negotiations are still ongoing.

Sorghum Exports Meeting Global Demand

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced today it has approved the purchase of 97,120 metric tons, or 3.8 million bushels, of sorghum for export through the USAID Food for Peace program. The sorghum will go to Sudan and Ethiopia between March 5 and April 5, 2010. Sorghum was the second most utilized commodity for international food aid from the U.S. in 2008. Numbers for 2009 have not yet been released, but in 2008, 918,470 metric tons, or 36 million bushels of U.S. sorghum were exported for food aid. This represents 35 percent of USAID’s program shipments. [For the Fiscal Year 2008 Fact Sheet on sorghum for food aid, click here.](#)

Meanwhile, this month’s World Ag Supply and Demand Estimate indicated a 10 million bushel increase in sorghum exports to Japan and Mexico. This increase is a victory for farmers who invest in the Sorghum Checkoff, as joint efforts with the U.S. Grains Council funded by the Sorghum Checkoff have resulted in some of the renewed interest from these markets. [Click here to learn more about Sorghum Checkoff marketing efforts.](#)

Sorghum Makes the Cover of Ethanol Producer Magazine

Our favorite ethanol feedstock graces the cover of the March 2010 issue of [Ethanol Producer magazine](#), one of the major publications and information sources for the ethanol industry. A cover shot taken by Debbie McNinch shows Western Plains Agri-Energy in Oakley, Kansas standing in a field of mature sorghum. The cover story, "Sorghum Surges", was written by associate editor Holly Jessen and focuses on the growth of sorghum in the ethanol industry and the results of a study funded by the Sorghum Checkoff to identify advantages and barriers to using sorghum for ethanol. The results of that study will be leveraged to benefit producers by bolstering markets for sorghum-based ethanol across the United States.

The article also hones in on the market for sorghum distillers grains, comparing the cost, nutritional value and availability to corn distillers. Sorghum distillers are sometimes shunned for their darker color, even though nutritional value is similar and, at the right price, can provide a net gain for livestock producers.

The article quotes Sorghum Checkoff Marketing Director, Florentino Lopez. "More research on feeding all forms of sorghum is likely to come with time, Lopez adds. 'We're very encouraged by sorghum being utilized in the ethanol industry and we welcome that as a continuing outlet for sorghum.'"

Read the entire article in [Ethanol Producer magazine](#).

Three Feet of Snow Shut Down NSP Fly-In and Congress

NSP's annual D.C. Fly-In and Leadership Training would have taken over 30 producers and industry leaders to Washington, D.C. this week to deliver sorghum's message to the Hill and sharpen their skills at communicating about the agriculture industry. However, record snowfall in D.C. not only resulted in cancelled flights and impassable runways, but also in the closure of Congressional offices and many federal agencies. The Fly-In had to be cancelled, but NSP is exploring options for rescheduling the event.

[Just for fun, watch a 30-second time lapse video of the first 30 hours of snow in D.C.](#)

Ag Journalism Loses a Friend

Long-time agricultural journalist Ann Toner Gottwald, of rural Nebraska City, lost her battle with cancer this past Saturday. Ann, a reporter with great knowledge and understanding of agricultural issues, wrote for the Omaha World-Herald and the Nebraska Farmer Magazine, among other publications. Ann won the National Association of Agricultural Journalists top writing award in 1983, and was the organization's president in 1985. A rosary for Ann was held Wednesday in Nebraska City, and funeral services were today. Ann's family requests memorials be sent to St. Joseph Catholic Church, 5592 O Road, Nebraska City, NE, 68410-2844.

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 Web site at www.sorghumgrowers.com. Write to us at National Sorghum Producers, 4201 N Interstate 27, Lubbock,

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Quote of the Week:

"Loyalty isn't standing by someone when he's right. That's good judgment. Loyalty is standing by someone when he's wrong."

-- Susan Estrich

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