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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

the voice of the sorghum industry

Court Denies CARB's Motion to Dismiss

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, acting without a hearing, issued an order June 16 denying a Motion to Dismiss filed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CARB was charged by the Renewable Fuels Association, along with several California agricultural organizations, for disregarding the required administrative process after the board approved the low-carbon fuel standard (LCFS) in 2009. The LCFS would require ethanol producers to reduce the carbon intensity of their products by 10 percent by 2020. The ethanol industry has opposed the requirements because the carbon intensity formula would apply a life-cycle emissions test that takes into account indirect land use change (ILUC) as determined by CARB. Under CARB's ILUC theory, the production of grain-based ethanol is assumed to result in the clearing of more land for crop production, which, according to CARB, would release greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

While the case is not over yet, the decision is a positive development for grain-based ethanol producers.

FSA County Committee Nominations Now Open

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced June 15 that farmer and rancher candidate nominations have begun for local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. The nomination period continues through Monday, Aug. 2, 2010, with the election taking place between Friday, Nov. 5 and the close of business on Monday, Dec. 6.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election, and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign the nomination form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.

Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2. FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs, and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. FSA will mail ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 5. The ballots are due back to the local county office either by mail or in person by Dec. 6. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2011.

Sorghum's Weed Fighting Abilities Give Producers Options

Researchers at the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) have found a way to make sorghum a better option for producers, while also discovering a way to reduce pesticide use in the production of other crops.

Sorghum secretes a compound known as sorgoleone that is instrumental in helping the plant combat weeds, but it can also cause problems for producers who want to plant different crops on those fields. The researchers at the ARS Natural Products Utilization Unit in Oxford, Miss., found two gene sequences expressed in the plant root hair cells that produced the enzymes. When they silenced the two gene sequences, it dramatically reduced sorgoleone levels in the sorghum plants produced.

The results could lead to sorghum lines without the soil toxicity problem, as well as lines with higher levels of sorgoleone that offer superior weed-fighting capabilities while reducing pesticide use. This discovery will enable researchers to look for similar gene sequences in other crops to increase their natural pest-fighting capabilities and reduce the need for pesticides.

Reauthorized Nutrition Bill Could Take Funding From Farm Programs

The Senate Agriculture Committee unanimously approved the reauthorization bill for the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, which was introduced in March of this year. The bipartisan House bill, Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act, has 30 cosponsors and despite an overloaded congressional agenda, the bill is expected to be signed into law this year. While lawmakers face challenges as they attempt to expand federal school meals programs, other concerns from producers continue to linger from the time the bill was announced because a search for new funds is being focused on farm and conservation programs even though nutrition programs already consume 80 percent of USDA spending. NSP will continue to monitor this process on your behalf.

Website Defends Atrazine

The EPA is re-visiting its stance on the herbicide atrazine, even after its recent re-registration. The agency's study is entitled, "Re-evaluation of Human Health Effects of Atrazine: Review of Experimental Animal and In Vitro Studies and Drinking Water Monitoring Frequency". In 2006, the EPA completed a 12-year evaluation of the herbicide and found it does not cause cancer and is safe for use on agricultural crops. In addition, no water system in the Atrazine Monitoring Program has exceeded the EPA's protective standards of three parts per billion for four years straight. The Triazine Network is made up of farmers and farming groups, including NSP, concerned about issues regarding the regulation of atrazine. The Triazine Network established the website AgSense.org to defend atrazine against the relentless attacks from environmentalists. The site contains science-based facts and materials about atrazine that combat the misleading, false information released by alarmists. For more information, visit www.agsense.org.

NSP Invited to Testify before House Agriculture Subcommittee

The House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management began hearings today to review U.S. farm safety net programs in advance of the 2012 Farm Bill. Writing the 2012 Farm Bill is underway after field hearings hosted in eight various states across the United States. National Sorghum Producers has been asked to testify at the June 24 hearing next week before the House Agriculture Committee in Washington, D.C. NSP Chairman Gerald Simonsen will represent NSP and its producers by placing emphasis on farm policy as it relates to sorghum including crop insurance, budgets, the importance of the Energy Title to sorghum producers, and the sustainability of sorghum.

Upcoming Field Days and Events

June 23	SDSU Field Day, <i>Highmore, South Dakota</i>
July 10	Over-the-Top Herbicide Field Day, <i>North Platte, Nebraska</i>
July 13	Over-the-Top Herbicide Field Day, <i>Manhattan, Kansas</i>
July 14	MU Field Day, <i>Columbia, Missouri</i>
July 15	OSU Extension Field Day, <i>Perkins, Oklahoma</i>

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 lindsay@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:

"I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural."

- Thomas Jefferson

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