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SORGHUM E-Notes

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NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:
the voice of the sorghum industry

NSP Encourages Senate to Include Ag in Credit Legislation

The National Sorghum Producers, along with American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Union and other agricultural organizations, signed a letter to senators this week expressing concern over pending legislative changes that might decrease availability of credit for agriculture or increase its cost from its major providers.

The legislation contains language that addresses the proprietary trading activity of insured depository institutions, bank holding companies or subsidiaries of these entities, the so-called "Volcker Rule." An exception to these new limitations is provided for obligations of the Federal government and certain GSEs, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, because of the assumption that the Volcker Rule limitations might adversely impact the trading of these obligations and their liquidity. However, the GSEs that ensure that agriculture has access to the credit it needs, such as the Farm Credit System, Farmer Mac and the Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBs), are not included in this exception.

In the letter, the organizations urged senators to change the Volcker Rule language to ensure that all of the GSE obligations are treated the same as US Treasury debt. The letter states, "The result of the GSEs serving agriculture being excluded from the Volcker Rule exception is that for the first time the GSEs that serve agriculture will be separated out and treated differently, threatening to alter how their obligations are traded in the future. This could translate into higher interest rates for farmers and greater uncertainty of funding.

"We are not willing to accept a simple assurance that market makers won't treat the agricultural GSEs differently in the future. The access of farmers and ranchers to the nation's debt markets should not be left to the whim of market makers in this way. Agriculture must have access to credit on terms that are affordable and reliable."

Crop Progress

Planting across the Sorghum Belt is active, according to the May 10 crop reports from the National Agricultural Statistics Service. In Texas, sorghum condition was mostly good to excellent statewide, with 74 percent of the crop planted. Some farmers in the Northern High Plains are still waiting to begin sorghum plantings and are expecting to begin around the end of May. In Kansas, 5 percent of the sorghum crop is planted, compared to none at this time last year. Eight percent of the sorghum crop has been planted in Nebraska, ahead of last year's 6 percent. In Oklahoma, seedbed preparation for sorghum jumped 15 points to reach 76 percent complete as 24 percent of the sorghum crop planted by the week's

end. Eight percent of New Mexico's sorghum crop has been planted, up 5 percent from its 5-year average. Colorado sorghum farmers have planted 17 percent of their crop, compared to 9 percent for the 5-year average. In Missouri, sorghum planting was reported at 18 percent complete, just over 11 days ahead of last year, but similar to normal.

In the South, Arkansas sorghum planting was 98 percent complete, with sorghum emerged at 88 percent. In Louisiana, 91 percent of the sorghum crop was planted, with emerged sorghum increasing to 60 percent, 7 points behind the 5-year average.

CSP Sign-Up Deadline Approaching

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications from agricultural landowners for the next Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funding cycle that ends on June 11, 2010. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and those not received by June 11 will be considered for funding after Oct. 1, 2010.

Producers are encouraged to apply for CSP now to ensure their applications will be considered during this funding and ranking period. However, they can make their final decision to participate in the program before they sign a contract. USDA expects the CSP final rule, which establishes the policies and procedures for the program, to be announced within the next several weeks.

CSP, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial forestland.

Potential applicants are encouraged to use the CSP self-screening checklist to determine if the new program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offices or on the NRCS website at [://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html).

LSU AgCenter Investigates Sweet Sorghum for Bioenergy

The Louisiana State University AgCenter made a major commitment about five years ago to funnel resources into bioenergy research. As a result, the center will establish the Louisiana Institute for Biofuels and Bioprocessing. The school's regents have funded the project for just one year, during which the institute's leadership must form an advisory board and set up the structure for expansion of bioenergy research. John Russin, LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor and institute director, says the institute puts a face on their biofuels research and will help them obtain grants.

So far, the AgCenter has developed three sugarcane varieties, known as "energy cane," which are higher in fiber than regular sugarcane and yet produce raw sugar. Another crop under investigation is sweet sorghum, a high-fiber plant that's a cousin of grain sorghum but looks more like sugarcane. The advantage of sweet sorghum is it can grow on marginal soils and can be harvested with the same equipment as sugarcane.

Herbicide-Tolerant Grain Sorghum Expected in 2012

The first new herbicide-tolerant grain sorghum hybrids are expected to be available for the 2012 growing season. The new ALS-tolerant and ACCase-tolerant Inzen traits will provide sorghum growers with over-the-top grass and broadleaf weed control options needed for more versatile application timing.

Wayne Schumacher, DuPont Inzen trait manager, said DuPont has been working with the United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) to build stewardship education programs to protect the long-term viability of the new herbicide traits from developing resistance. DuPont, USCP and participating universities will also be hosting a number of field trials in several states, including Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Colorado and Nebraska, to introduce growers to the new herbicide traits.

To listen to the interview with DuPont's Wayne Schumacher on the Brownfield News website, go to [://brownfieldnews.com/2010/05/12/coming-soon-inzen-herbicide-tolerant-grain-sorghum/](http://brownfieldnews.com/2010/05/12/coming-soon-inzen-herbicide-tolerant-grain-sorghum/) .

Scholarship Opportunity for Students with Sorghum Career Interests

Retired Dekalb sorghum breeder, Bruce Maunder, PhD, established a \$1,000 scholarship in 2004 aimed at supporting a student with a career interest in sorghum production or research. The scholarship is administered through the KSU Center for Sorghum Improvement. The Maunder scholarship is available to K-State undergrad students who are enrolled in the College of Agriculture and display an interest in sorghum, which can include a history of growing sorghum on the family farm, an internship where sorghum was an important part of their activity, participation in an undergraduate research project focused on sorghum, working as a student worker on a project focused on sorghum, or other activities.

Students are asked to submit a completed application, an official copy of current transcripts, a two-page vita, and two letters of recommendation. Applications are due June 1, 2010. Contact @ksu.edu for more information.

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 @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:

"Common sense is the best sense I know of."

-- Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773)

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