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## **SORGHUM E-Notes**

April 7, 2011

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:

*the voice of the sorghum industry*

### **Sorghum Checkoff Passes, Industry Takes Encouraging Leap Forward**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced April 6 the United Sorghum Checkoff Program referendum passed with a majority consensus and the Sorghum Checkoff will remain in operation.

Gerald Simonsen, National Sorghum Producers chairman of the board and sorghum farmer from Ruskin, Neb., proclaimed the results as a huge win for the industry and sorghum farmers across the nation.

“The NSP board recognized a need three years ago for improvement in the sorghum industry in the areas of market development, research and education,” said Simonsen. “We developed a vision, worked with USDA to create the program, and are proud of the results the Sorghum Checkoff has produced in its two short years of operation.”

Barry Evans, a sorghum farmer from Kress, Texas, said he is proud of those who banded together and foresaw the changes required to push the sorghum industry forward.

“Farmers are known to take the initiative and implement the steps necessary to accomplish a goal. This is a prime example of seeing a need and coming together to further our industry,” said Evans. “The projects that will be undertaken could never happen with one person, but when we join together, we can achieve a more diversified and profitable industry. Sorghum needed this.”

“This will breathe new life into the sorghum industry,” said Terry Swanson, vice chairman of the board and sorghum farmer from Walsh, Colo., “The research and marketing component of the checkoff is an integral part of the success of our industry—an area that did not receive much support until now. Sorghum is gaining the technology needed to regain acres lost in the past, and producers are becoming more aware of the far reaching benefits sorghum has to offer.”

### **Government Shutdown Looms**

Tomorrow marks the end of the federal government’s most recent continuing resolution (CR), a temporary spending measure to fund the government in absence of a long-term budget agreement between the House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats. Sources say a budget-cut number between parties has been agreed upon, but there are still some sticky policy issues being pushed that have not been resolved. With lack of an agreement, the government is headed toward a shutdown in absence of funding for daily operations. And while rural America may not feel the impacts immediately, the long-term effects of a shutdown could range from uncomfortable to devastating. Government employees received notification this week of who is and is not an essential employee. Non-essential employees will be required to turn in

their keys, blackberries and identification cards and will not be paid or allowed to report to work if the two sides cannot reach agreement, affecting everything from tax filing to veterans benefits. The CR under most recent consideration, if passed, will extend federal funding through next week with a \$12 billion cut, giving Congress another few days to reach a compromise on a longer-term budget deal.

If the House and Senate can come to any agreement on funding for the rest of the 2011 fiscal year, it will very likely go beyond discretionary spending and cut deep into mandatory spending programs. Of particular concern to sorghum are energy programs like the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (Section 9011) and the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels (Section 9005). Conservation programs may also be on the chopping block, and ultimately, funding cuts in the FY 2011 spending measure will reduce the starting point for FY 2012 budgeting. NSP is closely monitoring all movement on discretionary and mandatory programs and may call on you, our membership, to reach out to your congressmen and senators to save these important programs.

## **Ryan Releases 2012 Budget Cuts**

Meanwhile, the much-anticipated release of House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan's 2012 budget was almost overshadowed by the possibility of a government shutdown. Ryan's cuts to agriculture over the next decade include \$30 billion in cuts to crop insurance, trade and commodity programs. Conservation programs would sacrifice another \$18 billion and nutrition programs, which are a part of the farm bill budget, would lose \$100 billion over 10 years. Ryan targeted cuts to direct payments, saying that, "With crop prices – and deficits – hitting new highs, it is time to adjust support to this industry to reflect economic realities." Agriculture faces a difficult task in heralding the need for solid farm policy when prices are high, making it ever more important that producers constantly remind their leaders that prices are cyclical and what goes up, will most certainly come down.

Congressman Frank Lucas (R-OK), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, responded quickly to Ryan's budget saying that, "The House Budget Committee has outlined a plan that may shock some...While I might not agree with every proposed cut, we are well past the point where trillion-dollar deficits can be ignored." He underscored his committee's ultimate authority to write the House's 2012 farm bill saying, "As for the policy suggestions that Chairman Ryan or the President use to reach the numbers they put in their budgets, they are simply suggestions. At the end of the day, members of the House Agriculture Committee and I will write the next farm bill."

It is important to point out that while the House handles a flurry of budget-cutting measures, the Senate is still controlled by Democrats. Both the House and Senate must pass any budget measure in order for it to become the law of the land. However, even if only the House passes Ryan's budget proposal, the House Agriculture Committee will have to draft its version of the 2012 Farm Bill within the confines set forth by Chairman Ryan. The Senate has no obligation to write their bill to include such cuts, which guarantees a thorny farm bill conference committee between the House and the Senate next year.

## **House Passes Measure to Block EPA Climate Regulations**

The U.S. House of Representatives voted April 7 to block Environmental Protection Agency climate regulations. This is a win for agriculture, but H.R. 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act, still faces trouble passing through the Senate and eventually reaching the White House. It did make a declarative statement, however, garnering bipartisan support with its 255-172 passage Thursday on the House Floor.

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN), an original co-sponsor of the bill, had the following to say after the bill's passage.

"This bill hits the pause button on EPA's current efforts to regulate greenhouse gases. America's farmers and ranchers are committed to preserving our natural resources for the next generation, but what we're seeing from EPA could potentially interfere with conservation efforts already underway. EPA's regulations would not only make it harder for agriculture producers to meet increased demand but raise costs on all consumers. If Congress fails to act, the economic effects could be devastating. I urge the Senate to quickly consider this legislation."

## **Senate Agriculture Subcommittee Assignments Announced**

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Ranking Member Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS) announced April 6 assignments for the committee's five subcommittees for the 112th Congress. Below are the designated subcommittee chairmen.

- Sen. Ben Nelson (NE): Commodities, Markets, Trade and Risk Management
- Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH): Jobs, Rural Economic Growth and Energy Innovation
- Sen. Michael Bennett (CO): Conservation, Forestry and Natural Resources
- Sen. Robert Casey (PA): Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food and Agricultural Research
- Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (NY): Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, Marketing and Agriculture Security

## **1099 Repeal Passes Senate, On to White House**

Tuesday afternoon the U.S. Senate voted 87 to 12 passing H.R. 4, the bill repealing expanded 1099 business reporting requirements. These new requirements were part of last year's health care law that would require businesses to file tax forms for every vendor selling them more than \$600 in goods each year, which would place a large paperwork burden for farmers and ranchers. The bill will now head to President Obama's desk to be signed. Republicans hope other such bills will follow, resulting in the entire health care law being scrapped.

## **Monsanto Searches for Farm Mom of the Year**

For the second year in a row Monsanto will be searching for the Farm Mom of the Year. To be eligible, a mom must be at least 18 years of age and work on a working farm or livestock operation. Anyone can submit a nomination by visiting the America's Farmers website and explaining in 300 words or fewer how their favorite farm mom embodies the farm family way of life. Nominations will be judged by Monsanto and American Agri-Women (AAW), a national coalition of women's farmer, ranch and agribusiness organizations.

Complete eligibility requirements and official rules for America's Farmers Mom of the Year can be obtained online at <http://www.AmericasFarmers.com> or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to America's Farmers Mom of the Year Program, 914 Spruce Street, St. Louis, MO 63102. Entry deadline is May 8.

## **Texas Sorghum Planting Up**

In Texas, sorghum field preparation and pre-watering for spring planting were active in areas of the Northern High Plains. Sorghum cultivation was active in the Coastal Bend, and overall, 50 percent of acres have been planted, up 15 percent from last year and up 6 percent from the 5-year average.

## **New Insecticide to Help Sorghum Farmers**

Bayer CropScience has introduced a new pesticide to help combat webworms, earworms, headworms, armyworms and other Lepidoptera species. Belt™ insecticide is active on most worm pests, including resistant populations and late-stage larvae. The new insecticide will give sorghum farmers a new option in pest control.

## **Upcoming Field Days and Events**

<b>April 28</b>	International Food Aid and Development Conference, <i>Kansas City, Mo.</i>
<b>April 28</b>	Oklahoma Commission Meeting, <i>Oklahoma City, Okla.</i>
<b>May 11-12</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> Distillers Grains Symposium, <i>Kansas City, Mo.</i>
<b>June 14-15</b>	Plains Nutrition Council, <i>San Antonio, Texas</i>
<b>June 20-21</b>	Mid-South Ruminant Nutrition Conference, <i>Grapevine, Texas</i>
<b>June 27-29</b>	International Food Aid and Development Conference, <i>Kansas City, Mo.</i>
<b>June 27-30</b>	Fuel Ethanol Workshop, <i>Indianapolis, Ind.</i>

## **Sign Up to Receive the Sorghum Checkoff e-Newsletter**

Sorghum producers can now receive monthly e-Newsletters from the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. To receive monthly news and information regarding the Sorghum Checkoff's efforts in sorghum research, education and market development contact [info@sorghumcheckoff.com](mailto:info@sorghumcheckoff.com) and provide your email address. You can also sign up at [www.SorghumCheckoff.com/contact-us](http://www.SorghumCheckoff.com/contact-us). You can also follow the Checkoff on Twitter @SorghumCheckoff.

## **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](http://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 [jennifer@sorghumgrowers.com](mailto:jennifer@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. You can also follow NSP on Twitter @SorghumGrowers, and you can find us on Facebook.

## **SORGHUM Notes is sponsored by:**

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## **Quote of the Week:**

*“Expect victory and you make victory.”*

— Preston Bradley

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