

Terms of Four Checkoff Directors Come to a Close

The terms of inaugural Sorghum Checkoff board members Billy Bob Brown of Panhandle, Texas, Louise Rigdon of Blackwell, Okla., James Vorderstrasse of Hebron, Neb., and Gary Kilgore of Chanute, Kan., came to a close after the organization's board meeting Dec. 13-14 in Lubbock, Texas.

The Sorghum Checkoff would like to thank outgoing directors for their dedication and service for the past three years. The experience, knowledge and passion of the board of directors drives the producer-funded organization and the sorghum industry into the future.

The Sorghum Checkoff board of directors is made up of sorghum producers representing the largest sorghum producing states in the Sorghum Belt. These producers are nominated by their qualified state organizations (QSO) and are appoint-

ed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to serve the sorghum industry.

Each director serves a three-year term and may serve up to two terms. The Sorghum Checkoff will welcome three new directors to its board in December. These directors were nominated by their state boards and associations and selected by the Secretary of Agriculture to serve their fellow sorghum producers in moving the industry forward.

For more information about becoming a Sorghum Checkoff director, contact your state board or association. For a list of qualified state organizations visit www.SorghumCheckoff.com.



The inaugural Sorghum Checkoff board of directors upon their appointment by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in Nov. 2008. (L to R, back row) Bill Kubecka, Palacios, Texas; James Vorderstrasse, Hebron, Neb.; Bill Greving, Prairie View, Kan.; Jeff Casten, Quenemo, Kan.; Louise Rigdon, Blackwell, Okla.; Stewart Weaver, Edmonson, Ark. (L to R, front row) Greg Shelor, Minneola, Kan.; Gary Kilgore, Chanute, Kan.; Troy Skarke, Claude, Texas; Earl Roemer, Healy, Kan.; Dale Artho, Wildorado, Texas; Billy Bob Brown, Panhandle, Texas.

INDUSTRY EVENTS CALENDAR

Jan. 17 - 18	Cover Your Acres Oberlin, Kan.
Jan. 24 - 25	No-Till on the Plains Salina, Kan.
Feb. 20 - 21	KS Commodity Classic Wichita, Kan.
Feb. 21 - 22	New Mexico Ag Expo Portales, N.M.
Feb. 28 - March 3	Commodity Classic Nashville, Tenn.
Feb. 28	USCP Board Meeting Nashville, Tenn.

SORGHUM CHECKOFF MISSION:

Investing your Sorghum Checkoff dollars to increase profitability for the sorghum industry.

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Japanese Video Crew Highlights Sorghum's Food Value

The Sorghum Checkoff and the U.S. Grains Council hosted a Japanese video crew to Texas and Kansas in November in an effort to increase awareness about sorghum as a healthy food option in Japan.

The crew shot video that was edited into an Japanese infomercial explaining the health benefits of sorghum. The video aired for the first time at a sorghum symposium in Tokyo where Japanese chefs prepared traditional dishes using sorghum. Texas A&M University sorghum food researcher, Lloyd Rooney, spoke about the sorghum food industry in the U.S.

"We hope this mission will help to build a refreshed identity for sorghum as a new healthy grains option in Japan," Florentino Lopez, Sorghum Checkoff executive director said. "By demonstrating how we grow, store, process and utilize sorghum in the U.S., we hope to establish a positive brand for sorghum in Japan and the rest of Southeast Asia."

The group visited Texas A&M University in College Station where they interviewed several researchers working on sorghum and shot video of the sorghum food production process. They

also shot video of a local grocery store selling sorghum-based foods and visited an elevator to learn more about the sorghum storage process.

While in Kansas, the group shot video of sorghum harvest and different varieties of sorghum. They also sampled many different sorghum foods prepared by researchers at Kansas State University and USDA. Barbra Klimont of the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers hosted a test kitchen where she prepared several sorghum dishes and explained how sorghum can provide simple, family-friendly meals.

Japan is the third largest importer of U.S sorghum and primarily utilizes the grain in their livestock industry. By promoting sorghum as a healthy food product, the Sorghum Checkoff hopes to increase demand for sorghum and increase profitability for sorghum farmers.

"Sorghum is a nutrient rich whole grain with potential health attributes, such as antioxidants, which are very attractive to the Japanese public," Lopez said. "We look forward to working with the U.S. Grains Council to further promote sorghum in Japan as a healthy whole grain."



Understanding the Sorghum Checkoff Assessment

When the Sorghum Checkoff was established in 2008, the board of directors made the decision to base the assessment on a percentage of the net price. Therefore, when prices are low, the checkoff is lower, and when prices are high, the checkoff is higher. The assessment of grain sorghum comes to just over one half of a penny per dollar paid for the load of grain.

Who collects the Sorghum Checkoff assessment?

These dollars are collected by the first purchaser to which a producer sells grain. This may be the elevator, ethanol plant or livestock operation. On forage sorghum, collection only occurs on forages sold. For example, a producer who sells forage sorghum to a neighboring dairy will pay the assessment. However, dairymen who grow and utilize their own sorghum silage or hay will not pay an assessment.

How can I calculate my assesment?

Grain assesment = Net Market Value x .006

Forage assesment = Net Market Value X .0035

What is the 'Net Market Value' of my sorghum?

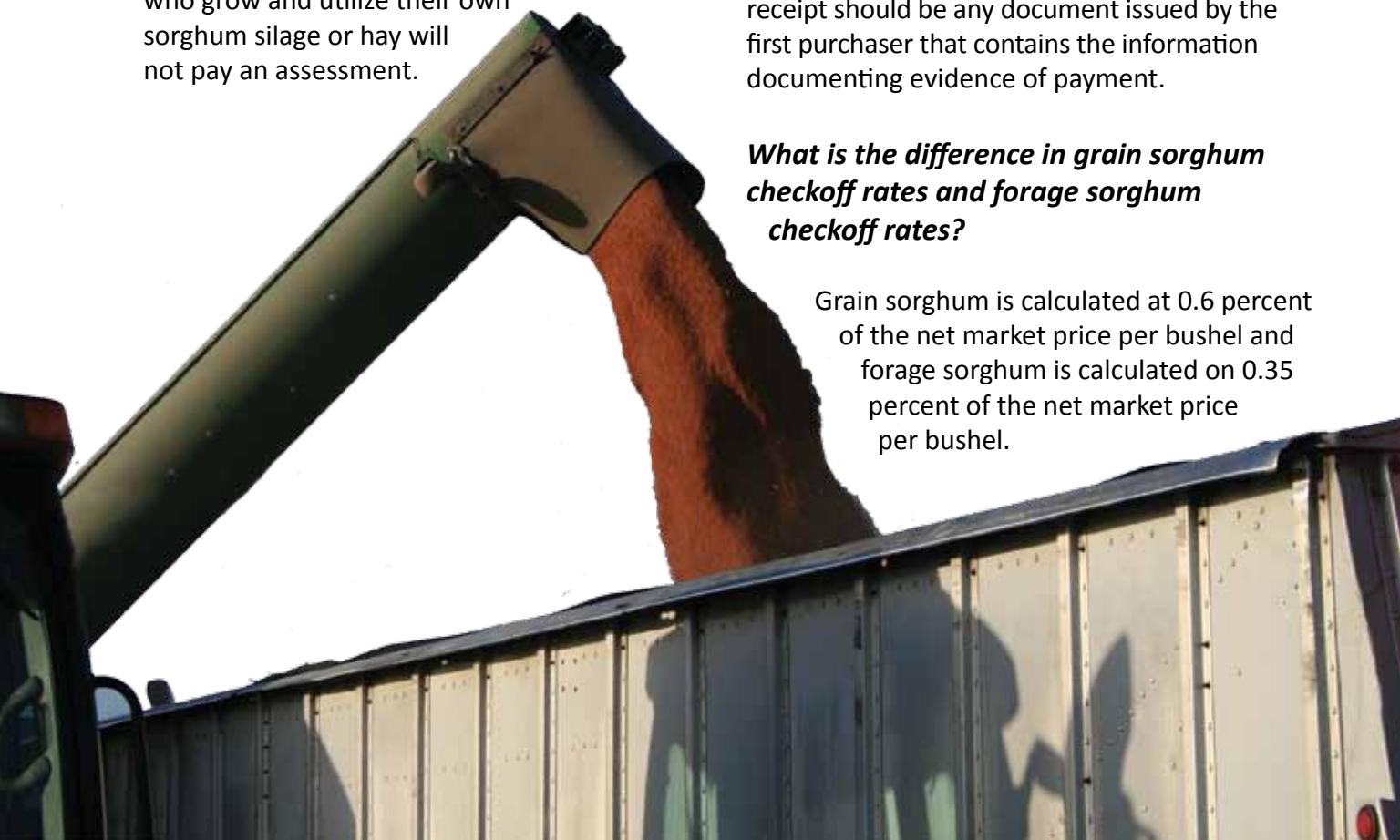
Net market value is the value found by multiplying the new market price by the appropriate quantity of the volumetric units, or the minimum value in a production contract received by a producer for sorghum. This is calculated after adjustment for any premiums or discounts which may include the quality premiums and discounts, storage charges, handling charges, drying charges and freight if paid by all who deliver to the first purchaser.

How do I know I have paid the assesment?

First purchasers are required to provide a receipt indicating payment of the assesment. This receipt should be any document issued by the first purchaser that contains the information documenting evidence of payment.

What is the difference in grain sorghum checkoff rates and forage sorghum checkoff rates?

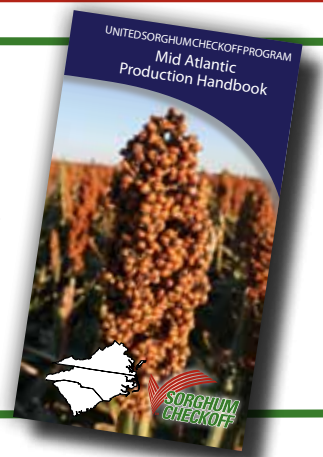
Grain sorghum is calculated at 0.6 percent of the net market price per bushel and forage sorghum is calculated on 0.35 percent of the net market price per bushel.



Mid-Atlantic Production Guide Now Available

The Sorghum Checkoff has released a production guide for the Mid-Atlantic region to promote the profitability of sorghum in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

As markets for sorghum increase in this area, the Sorghum Checkoff is working to help producers get the most out of their crop. The guides are full of tips on nitrogen application, pest control, seeding rates, and much more. Production guides for all sorghum producing regions are available online at www.SorghumCheckoff.com and in print by calling 877-643-8727.



K-State Develops New Food Aid Product

Food aid currently represents about six percent of the U.S. sorghum market, making it a major customer of sorghum producers. While food aid sources quite a bit of sorghum from the U.S., there are a limited number of products available using sorghum.

Non-profit organizations buy food aid products to donate to people in needy countries. These organizations consider multiple factors when choosing a product for a specific area or population, including the culture's familiarity with the product. Sorghum is quite well known in many parts of Africa, which often require food aid assistance. However, because sorghum is not very well known to U.S. non-profit organizations, they are less likely to choose it.

To combat this limitation, the Sorghum Checkoff published a booklet to educate food aid buyers about the benefits of sorghum in many food products and has been working with several institutions to create new products to add sorghum to the food aid basket.

Dr. Sajid Alavi of Kansas State University has continued his work on extruded sorghum products, progressing from a puff-like cereal a few months ago to a finely-ground porridge that can be fortified with vitamins and minerals and requires minimal amounts of energy to prepare.

"This project focuses on a new food aid product within the basket of products that exist for food aid," Alavi said. "We created a sorghum-soy fortified blend, which when mixed with boiling water, makes porridge ideal to address issues of childhood and infant malnutrition."

This new product, initially funded by USCP, can be mixed with many other products, such as cowpeas, to adapt to the needs of various populations. Organizations buying food aid products also benefit from sorghum because it requires lower inputs than many crops, often making it more economically priced.

USDA recently chose Alavi's project at K-State for funding to increase the number of products in the food aid basket. The \$3 million grant will fund K-State's research with sorghum and field test the products in Tanzania. Through this pilot program, USDA hopes to identify more effective products to distribute through food aid. This project could also lead to more opportunities for sorghum in the food aid arena.

"We are grateful to USCP and USDA for their support in developing these products," Alavi said. "We are continuing to work on other materials to blend with sorghum to increase the amount of sorghum included in food aid, which in return, will increase demand."