

Growing Through Partnership in Sustainability

This year has been unprecedented in many ways as our lives have been upended and reshaped into a new virtual reality defined by social distancing. We are now left with the urgent question of what life will look like on the other side of COVID-19. However, despite all the changes and uncertainties that we have faced, individuals and industries have continued in their efforts to push forward in responding to new opportunities and addressing the world's most pressing needs.

This is no truer than in sustainability. In the past year, countless companies have made or reinforced corporate-level climate commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, become carbon neutral, cut energy consumption and more. Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as The Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund are leading the charge in focusing increasing attention on farm-level solutions to climate challenges.

Private industry is seeing a substantial uptick in the dollars invested in grower partnerships centered around the implementation of regenerative and sustainable farming practices. There is also significant expansion in opportunities for pro-

ducer participation in carbon or ecosystem services markets. Environmental and agricultural alliances are forming on the political front to help shape future policy initiatives aimed at agriculture's role in climate change mitigation while consumer interest in the environmental impact of the products they purchase only continues to grow.

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program is equally engaged in this space. Since cementing its commitment to sustainability as a dedicated program area, the Checkoff has been active in building partnerships, growing visibility and identifying opportunities for growers and markets alike. In a reality in which consumers and food companies are increasingly demanding ingredients that are not only sustainable, but also have concrete data to back up those claims, the Checkoff is building a sustainability initiative that better connects growers to end users in creating new value opportunities.

One exciting example of this is a growing relationship between the Checkoff and Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever (pheasantsforever.org), the largest nonprofit organizations in the U.S. dedicated to upland habitat conservation. The two are in active collabora-

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tion around the development of a farm-focused initiative that would support sorghum growers as they implement conservation and sustainability-minded practices, while also linking key data about sorghum's soil health and water conservation attributes to consumer and food company demands and preferences.

The Checkoff has also been an engaged member of key coalitions in the sustainability space, including Field to Market (fieldtomarket.org), a set of diverse players working to create productive and profitable opportunities across the agricultural value chain for continuous improvements in environmental outcomes. The Checkoff is equally active in the Ecosystems Services Market Consortium (ecosystems-servicesmarket.org), a non-profit organization of corporations, agricultural producer associations, NGOs and technology companies working to launch a voluntary national ecosystem services market aimed at rewarding producers for their sustainable practices.

In an effort to strengthen and quantify the claims that sorghum can make in sustain-

ability, the Checkoff is enlisting the services of Sustainable Environmental Consultants (sustainableenviro.com) to help measure and communicate sorghum's impact, both in terms of the crop's key conservation qualities, such as water efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions, but also in regard to the conservation and regenerative practices implemented by many sorghum growers today.

Targeted messaging on behalf of and toward sorghum growers is of equally high priority in the effort to add value and create market opportunities. As a part of this, the Checkoff recently joined America's Conservation Ag Movement, a Farm Journal Trust in Food initiative (trustinfood.com). The movement assembles a variety of conservation NGOs as well as public and private entities to deploy nationwide outreach and education aimed at showcasing the efforts and achievements being made in sustainability and agriculture, while empowering farmers to adopt profitable conservation and stewardship practices on their operations. The movement's message is targeted to more

than two million growers and stakeholders across the U.S.

The sorghum industry's efforts do not stop there. In the past year alone, the team has been engaging with dozens of organizations to ensure sorghum has a place at the table and is well-positioned to capture value opportunities as they arise in the sustainability space. Success in this area will require both a commitment to continuous improvement on the ground and collaboration with a diverse set of allies. That is why the list of sorghum engagements has included fellow growers' associations, private consumer companies, environmental NGOs, technology and data capture enterprises, trade and promotion organizations and others.

Sorghum is the grain that gives to farms, to families and to ecosystems. By making sustainability a top priority, Team Sorghum is ensuring that growers capture the value of their sustainable practices and investments, while tapping into smart, creative solutions to help continue to drive improvements on the farm and beyond.



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Sorghum Checkoff Board Directors Sworn In, Officers Elected

During the Sorghum Checkoff's annual December board meeting held virtually, five directors were sworn in to complete their appointment to the board by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. Officers were also elected.

Returning directors include Klint Stewart from Columbus, Nebraska, as an at-large member; James Haase from Eads, Colorado, as an at-large member; Shayne Suppes from Scott City, Kansas, as a Kansas member; and Charles Ray Huddleston from Celina, Texas, as a Texas member. Ethan Miller from Columbia, Missouri, is newly appointed to the board and will serve as an at-large member. All directors will serve a three-year term.

"We welcome new and returning directors to the Sorghum Checkoff as we face 2021 and the opportunities and challenges it presents," Sorghum Checkoff Executive

Director Florentino Lopez said. "The Sorghum Checkoff Board directors work to increase shared value, enhance opportunity for producer profitability and advance demand for sorghum producers, and I look forward to the leadership these new and reappointed directors will provide."

New leadership was also elected during the meeting. Kent Martin from Alva, Oklahoma, will serve as chairman; Huddleston will serve as vice chairman; Boyd Funk of Garden City, Kansas, will continue his tenure as treasurer; and Adam Schindler from Reliance, South Dakota, will continue serving as the board's secretary. Craig Poore from Alton, Kansas, will transition to the role of past chairman for the remainder of his term on the board.

"I am excited and honored to serve in the leadership of the Sorghum Checkoff," Board of Directors Chairman Kent Martin said. "I will use this responsibility to advance the sorghum industry to the best of my ability."

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Verity Ulibarri, past chairwoman from Melrose, New Mexico, completed her term as a Sorghum Checkoff board member, but she will still serve the sorghum industry through her role on the U.S. Grains Council's board, using her experiences from the checkoff to leverage opportunities for the sorghum industry.

"We are deeply appreciative of our board directors—newly appointed, reappointed and retiring," Sorghum Checkoff CEO Tim Lust said. "The hard work and dedication of these individuals generates opportunity for sorghum farmers and the industry, and we're grateful for their efforts on behalf of all they represent."

For more information on the Sorghum Checkoff Board of Directors or how to become a Sorghum Checkoff board member, go to SorghumCheckoff.com.

Waxy Sorghum: What is it?

A primary goal for the United Sorghum Checkoff Program's board of directors is to increase the value of grain sorghum by providing end users with desired quality attributes. One attribute that has shown promise is waxy sorghum. What is it?

The first idea many people have upon hearing of waxy sorghum is a grain covered with a waxy, shiny coat. This is not the case. In fact, waxy sorghum is mostly indistinguishable from other grain sorghum in the field. The actual color of grain is as variable as non-waxy sorghum, coming in red, bronze, yellow, tan and white colors.

Waxy sorghum is distinguished because of the composition of starch in the grain. Starch in the endosperm of traditional grain sorghum is composed of two polymers—amylopectin and amylose. In traditional grain sorghum, the ratio of the two is approxi-

mately 75 percent amylopectin and 25 percent amylose. Where waxy sorghum sets itself apart is that its starch profile is almost entirely composed of amylopectin.

This unique quality gives waxy sorghum an advantage in some markets because amylopectin is easier to digest than amylose. Research suggests ethanol yield and fermentation efficiency may be improved with the use of waxy sorghum, as well.

Additionally, waxy sorghum may have a variety of potential uses and significant benefits in the worldwide food industry. This is especially true for baiju, the most popular alcoholic drink in the world. Sorghum is already the preferred source of starch in the all-important Chinese baijiu market where waxy sorghum could offer premium benefits to sorghum farmers.

Historically, waxy sorghum hybrids have exhibited some

agronomic shortfalls. The grain of waxy sorghum may deteriorate in the field under prolonged wet conditions late in the growing season. There have also been reports of some yield drag associated with waxy sorghum. However, with additional genomic knowledge and new breeding techniques, sorghum breeders are addressing these potential shortfalls and are confident waxy sorghum hybrids will eventually compete favorably with non-waxy hybrids.

The Sorghum Checkoff is currently working with seed companies and public seed developers to evaluate new, competitive waxy grain sorghum hybrids while simultaneously increasing testing of this product with end users. As always, the ultimate goal is to increase grain sorghum value for both the producer and consumer.



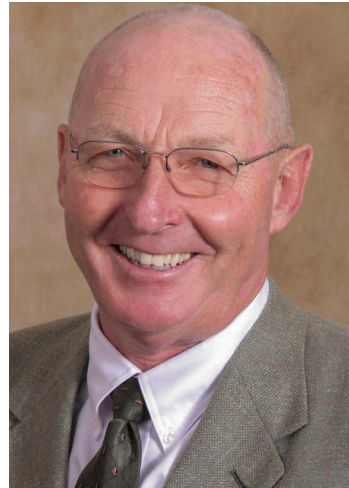
KENT MARTIN
CHAIRMAN



CHARLES RAY
HUDDLESTON
VICE CHAIRMAN



ADAM SCHINDLER
SECRETARY



BOYD FUNK
TREASURER

SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

- Jan 25-29 International Production & Processing Expo
Virtual Meeting
- Feb 10 Leadership Sorghum Zoom Program
Virtual Meeting
- Mar 2-5 Commodity Classic
Virtual Meeting

For more events, visit sorghumcheckoff.com/calendar

USCP MISSION

The Sorghum Checkoff commits to reveal the potential and versatility of sorghum through increased shared value.



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