



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **ESMC and The United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) Launch Project for Sorghum Farmers to Create Ecosystem Services Credits**

The Ecosystem Services Market Consortium (ESMC) and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program announce the launch of a pilot project in Western Kansas for sorghum farmers to generate high quality carbon, greenhouse gas, water quality and biodiversity credits in ESMC's market program. The project will test ESMC's streamlined programming to create environmental credits from sorghum farmers' fields. Many of the farmers are new to private voluntary ecosystem markets linked to conservation practice adoption, so the project will also develop knowledge, capacity and repeatability to continue expanding support for sorghum growers in the region.

Sorghum is a soil protecting, water conserving, climate resilient powerhouse crop that is packed full of nutrients and offers big benefits for our health, our wildlife, and our world. Sorghum is a valuable part of the High Plains farmer crop rotations - many farmers in the area use a wheat or corn/sorghum/fallow rotation. This high-energy crop gives more than it takes and is well adapted to both heat and drought making it a reliable and environmentally responsible option for farmers and consumers alike.

This research project covers about 5,000 acres in Western Kansas and is working with sorghum farmers interested in implementing conservation practices such as nutrient management and edge of field practices. Sorghum farmers can earn credits from increased soil carbon, reduced or avoided greenhouse gases, improved water quality, and preserved habitat at field edges that increase plant, bird and insect biodiversity and populations. In addition to the Sorghum Checkoff and ESMC, project partners include ServiTech who will provide soil sampling and lab analysis, and Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever – the nation's leading upland habitat conservation group - working on biodiversity components of the project.

"We are excited to provide this pilot opportunity to our farmers - especially to increase opportunities for edge of field practices that provide habitat for key species and earn biodiversity credits." Sorghum Checkoff Sustainability Director Adam York Said. "As The Resource Conserving Crop™, sorghum plays a key role in sustainable agriculture in Kansas and throughout the High Plains region of the United States. Working with ESMC, our pilot partner organizations, and our farmers to develop biodiversity credits is emblematic of our commitment to sustainability and on-farm profitability on the High Plains."

"As we continue to build out market program scope and scale, we are excited to bring on additional crops like sorghum." ESMC's Executive Director Debbie Reed said. "Partners like the Sorghum Checkoff help us ensure this program works first and foremost for agricultural producers, so they are rewarded for the value and the outcomes of their work and the adoption of conservation practices. Our role is to

document those improved outcomes in our science-based, standards-based market program and monetize the outcomes to benefit the growers.”

In 2022, ESMC is targeting up to 500,000 acres enrollment with [market program launch](#). ESMC’s program stacks multiple ecosystem credits, including increased soil carbon, reduced greenhouse gases, water quality, water use conservation, as well as biodiversity, to make ESMC a unique and attractive option for farmers and for buyers and investors seeking high quality carbon and environmental credits.

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#### **About Ecosystem Services Market Consortium**

*Ecosystem Services Market Consortium (ESMC) is a non-profit collective action program dedicated to scaling quantified and verified sustainable ecosystem services from agriculture. ESMC is a public private partnership of the agricultural supply chain and value chain – including agricultural producer groups and co-ops, major corporate food and beverage companies, agribusiness, conservation and environmental NGO’s, ag tech companies, land grant universities, and others. ESMC members have collectively invested in and are launching ESMC’s national scale market program in May 2022. Read more at [www.ecosystems-services-market.org](http://www.ecosystems-services-market.org).*

#### **About The United Sorghum Checkoff Program**

*The United Sorghum Checkoff Program is a producer-funded organization that is dedicated to improving the sorghum industry through research, promotion and education. For more information about the USCP and other research projects please visit [www.sorghumcheckoff.com](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com)*