



NEWSLETTER

sorghumcheckoff.com | Summer 2022

Sorghum Announced as Newest Addition to USDA Food Buying Guide

In a major step forward for the sorghum industry, school food-service providers and American schoolchildren, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently added sorghum, a nutrient-rich, high-protein, gluten-free ancient whole grain, to its Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs. The Food Buying Guide is the primary resource used by school foodservice directors to build menus that comply with USDA nutrition requirements.

"The inclusion of sorghum in the Food Buying Guide is a monumental win for sorghum producers as we continue seeking to develop new markets for our crop," United Sorghum Checkoff Program Executive Director Norma Ritz Johnson said. "Sorghum's inclusion in the guide is pivotal in our efforts to increase its visibility and ease-of-use among foodservice professionals, as well as the students they serve, and the industry is excited to deliver this nutritious whole grain to the plates of America's schoolchildren."

In an effort extending over many months, the USCP worked with USDA to add sorghum to the Food Buying Guide. This effort began with a formal request to USDA to consider adding sorghum to the Guide, and USCP has subsequently followed up with nutritional information to equip the agency with the necessary data to support the grain's inclu-

sion. This is just one piece of a larger, comprehensive strategy USCP is employing to develop new food markets for sorghum, including in federal school nutrition programs.

As of July 1, 2022, USDA implemented a new requirement stating at least 80 percent of the weekly grains in school lunch and breakfast menus must be whole-grain rich, which has resulted in school nutrition providers actively seeking foods to satisfy this requirement. As a nutrient-rich ancient whole grain, sorghum will prove to be the solution for school nutrition professionals for the upcoming school year and beyond.

"The Food Buying Guide is a critical resource on which foodservice professionals rely to formulate meal plans for school nutrition programs that meet USDA nutrition requirements," Sorghum Checkoff Director of Food Innovations & Institutional Markets Lanier Dabruzzi, MS, RD, LD, said. "As the 2022-23 school year opens, schools are working around a new 80 percent whole grain requirement. This timely addition will give school nutrition providers a new ingredient to include in bowls, salads, soups, baked goods and more."

The Food Buying Guide provides a roadmap for foodservice professionals to develop well-rounded nutritious menus

WHAT'S INSIDE

1

Sorghum Announced as Newest Addition to USDA Food Buying Guide

2

Summer Trade Teams Strengthen Trade Relationships

3

ESMC and USCP Launch Project for Sorghum Farmers to Realize Added Value in Ecosystem Services Credits

4

Sorghum Checkoff Continues the Cultivation of Sorghum Leaders



The National School Lunch Program provides low-cost or free lunches to **29.6 MILLION CHILDREN** each school day, at a total cost of **\$14.2 BILLION**



by defining how certain foods contribute, or credit, toward federal nutrition guidelines. The inclusion of whole grain sorghum, pearly sorghum and sorghum flour in this Guide is an important acknowledgement by USDA that sorghum is a nutritious addition to the plates of American

schoolchildren as a nutrient-rich, high-protein, gluten-free ancient whole grain.

Foodservice professionals who are interested in incorporating sorghum into their school menus as a healthy and gluten-free whole-grain can visit www.sorghumcheckoff.com, or

contact Lanier Dabruzzi at lanier@sorghumcheckoff.com, to learn more about purchasing and utilizing sorghum in a variety of ways, offering a new and nutritious menu option to satisfy students of all ages.

Summer Trade Teams Strengthen Trade Relationships

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program, along with our state partners and the U.S. Grains Council, typically hosts 7-10 trade teams each year, highlighting the complete marketing chain from field to port. While the spring and summer of 2022 did not bring as many trade team visits, the Sorghum Checkoff was happy to host one of the first sorghum buyer teams to the United States since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The vast majority of the U.S. sorghum crop is exported, so trade teams consisting of global buyers are important to help promote the value of U.S. sorghum across the globe, showcase our grower stories and help cultivate the important relationship between producer and buyer or end-user.

Domestic trade missions this year kicked off May 15-21 with buying teams from Spain, Portugal and Turkey. Given the ongoing shortage of non-GMO corn worldwide, an increased interest in the non-GMO status of sorghum played a role in why these particular countries visited the Sorghum Belt.

Turkey, a non-GMO corn importer that traditionally imports 6 million metric tons (MMT) of corn per year from the Black Sea area, has little experience with U.S. sorghum, but a portion of what has typically been corn purchases will need to be replaced by alternative non-GMO feedstocks in the coming year. Grain buyers from Spain and Portugal have more recent experiences with U.S. sorghum and typically

import U.S. sorghum when the price is more competitive.

During the week-long visit to Texas, the trade teams toured Quality Beef Producers feedlot in Wilderado, Amarillo Grain Exchange, Hansen-Mueller export facility, and Andersons, Inc. Houston Export Elevator. The team also met with Richardson Seeds, Attebury Grain and Texas Grain Sorghum Producers. Additionally, the group had the opportunity to participate in a tractor ride and planting at Friche Farms in Dumas, as they visited the Texas High Plains at the height of planting season.

Team members included importers and distributors of raw materials for their respective markets, as well as feed mill operators for livestock and pet food.

While the team was in the U.S.,

Riera Roura, a Barcelona-based importer handling 59 MBU of grain and oilseeds per year, received a vessel of U.S. sorghum in Spain. Their operations involve the importation and distribution of raw materials to the Spanish feed market. Year to date, Spain has imported 3.4 million bushels of U.S. sorghum.

Following the teams from Portugal, Spain and Turkey, a team of 13 delegates from the feed milling sector of Jalisco, Mexico,

attended the Feed Manufacturing on-site course at the International Grains Program at Kansas State University. While at K-State, the participants incorporated the knowledge learned in their respective operations to reassess U.S. sorghum in its formulations. The team toured a sorghum farm and ADM Animal Nutrition in Abilene, Kansas.

While travel restrictions have impacted in-person meetings and tours, which are an important

component to facilitating international trade, the Sorghum Checkoff is hopeful many more buyers will be visiting the Sorghum Belt during harvest to facilitate connections between buyers and U.S. sorghum farmers. These tours allow those buyers to better understand how sorghum is produced with the end goal of choosing U.S. sorghum, and U.S. sorghum farmers gain perspective of the needs, wants and uses of their U.S. product in another country.

ESMC and USCP Launch Project for Sorghum Farmers to Realize Added Value in Ecosystem Services Credits

The Ecosystem Services Market Consortium (ESMC) and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program have announced 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 programing 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.

The research project covers about 5,000 acres in western Kansas and works 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 eliminated greenhouse gasses, improved water quality, and preserved habitat at field edges that

increases plant, bird and insect biodiversity and populations. In addition to the Sorghum Checkoff and ESMC, project partners include ServiTech – which will provide soil sampling and lab analysis– as well as 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 of enrollment with the market program launch. ESMC's program stacks multiple ecosystem credits, including increased soil carbon, reducing 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. For more information contact Adam York at adam@sorghum-checkoff.com.

Sorghum Checkoff Continues the Cultivation of Sorghum Leaders

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program is accepting applications for Leadership Sorghum Class VI, a program designed to cultivate the next generation of sorghum leaders.

During the 14-month leadership program, class members will have the opportunity to experience various aspects of the sorghum industry, in addition to personal development and networking opportunities. Through both hands-on and classroom-style learning experiences, class members develop an understanding of how sorghum moves through the value chain, how checkoffs and stakeholder organizations interact on behalf of the industry, and what the future holds for sorghum.

"The design of the program was centered around farmers who are passionate and are looking for opportunities to grow in this industry," Sorghum Checkoff Executive Director Norma Ritz

Johnson said. "This investment in the program is not just an investment into individual class members, but the U.S. sorghum industry as a whole. Those who choose to participate will walk away armed with the skills, knowledge and understanding to be the next generation that takes the sorghum industry to new heights."

USDA-approved criteria states eligible applicants must be U.S. citizens and farmers actively engaged in sorghum production within the U.S. Fifteen growers will be accepted into the program's sixth class. More information on the class schedule and program criteria can be found at leadsorghum.com.

"Watching each class member grow, learn and experience new things has been so fulfilling," Director of Emerging Markets & Grower Leader Development Shelee Padgett said. "We are equipping each class of Leader-

ship Sorghum with the tools to advocate for sorghum, take newfound knowledge back to their communities, and further the industry by becoming involved in leadership positions across the industry."

Full consideration will be given to all applicants regardless of age, gender, race or occupation. Every effort will be made to select a class, based on the applicant pool, which is representative of the entire sorghum industry, its diversity and rural community interests.

Applications for the program are available at sorghumcheckoff.com/leadershipsorghum-apply/ and are due by 5:00 pm CST on September 23, 2022. Following the application deadline, all applications and references will be reviewed by a selection committee. Finalists may be contacted via phone to arrange an interview. For more information visit leadsorghum.com.

SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

August 11 Sorghum U/Wheat U™
Wichita, KS

August 15-18 National Sorghum Producers and Sorghum Checkoff Annual Board Meetings
Wichita, KS

Sept 7 Labor Day
Office Closed

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.



CONTACT US

Clint White

Director of Communications

(806) 687-8727

clint@sorghumcheckoff.com



@SorghumCheckoff