



# NEWSLETTER

sorghumcheckoff.com | Summer Edition 2023

## United Sorghum Checkoff Program Celebrates 15 Years of Innovation

**S**orghum industry leaders celebrated a milestone July 1, 2023. The date marked the 15th anniversary of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, the leading producer-funded marketing and promotion board that champions the sorghum industry in the United States. Since its founding, the Sorghum Checkoff has dedicated its efforts to advance sorghum profitability through innovative research, promotion and education.

"We've made significant strides in the past 15 years, and we're deeply committed to continuing to advance the crop for U.S. sorghum producers and end-users across the world," Sorghum Checkoff CEO Tim Lust said in the press release. "Our 13-member board of sorghum producers located across the U.S. has invested over \$46 million into research aimed at optimizing sorghum as a robust, profitable crop for several value-added end-use markets. These strategic projects and collaborations in research, education and market development have been pivotal to the sorghum industry's success and are anticipated to stimulate further growth."

Over the past decade-and-a-half, the Sorghum Checkoff has made significant strides, including funneling resources into

cutting-edge research to advance production techniques. Key agronomic milestones include the introduction of the first-ever over-the-top weed and grass control in sorghum, the development of sorghum (sugarcane) aphid-tolerant hybrids and the potential to fast-track breeding methods due to the discovery of doubled haploid in sorghum.

The Sorghum Checkoff has also played a key role in expanding international markets, specifically in countries like China, and has significantly boosted public awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits, establishing sorghum as a high-value solution to their end-use needs.

A recent return on investment study revealed the significant positive impact of expenditures on the total exports of sorghum by promoting sorghum internationally. Between 2008 and 2021, an approximate investment of \$44.5 million yielded an impressive return of \$376.7 million, reflecting a robust return on investment ratio of 7-to-1. This study also highlighted the Sorghum Checkoff's investments in crop improvement activities, resulting in a noteworthy increase in sorghum production from 133.3 million to 166.8 million bushels during the same period.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### 1

United Sorghum Checkoff Program Celebrates 15 Years of Innovation

### 2

Export Sorghum Conference Sparks Global Interest

### 3

Sorghum Checkoff Amplifies International Presence at Global Sorghum Conference



“Sorghum is a crucial crop for the U.S., and it holds immense potential for growth and expansion,” Sorghum Checkoff Executive Director Norma Ritz Johnson said in the release. “Our work in the last 15 years has laid a strong foundation and promising future for the sorghum industry, and we are eager to continue that success as we amplify our mission to support and promote The Resource Conserving Crop™.”

With a clear focus on the future, the Sorghum Checkoff continues to place a strong emphasis on expanding the demand for sorghum within premium markets. This objective will be pursued through the establishment of robust strategic partnerships, the implementation of compelling marketing campaigns and the provision of targeted technical assistance programs. These efforts aim to not only increase demand but also have a tangible impact on yields and allow for significant growth and progress in the sorghum industry.

Grounded in breakthrough nutritional research, the Sorghum Checkoff plans to promote the potential of sorghum as a healthy, versatile food source for consumers. Simultaneously, the growing pet food market presents a prime opportunity for introducing more sorghum-based products.

On the production side, the Sorghum Checkoff is dedicated to fostering innovative practices and technologies aimed at increasing sorghum yields. This commitment to enhancing productivity will play a crucial role in meeting the rising demand for sorghum. Moreover, the Sorghum Checkoff is actively promoting the utilization of sorghum in various industries, including aquaculture and dairy. By exploring and embracing new applications, the Sorghum Checkoff aims to unlock additional market opportunities and drive further growth within the sorghum industry.

## Harvesting Success: USCP Achievements

**Crop Enhancement:** The sorghum industry has witnessed significant growth thanks to the program’s investments in crop improvement. This initiative has led to increased average yields and the development of superior sorghum hybrids with enhanced yield potential, standability, stress tolerance and disease resistance.

Notable advancements include the introduction of the first-ever over-the-top weed and grass control in sorghum, the development of sorghum (sugarcane) aphid-tolerant hybrids and the potential to fast-track breeding methods due to the discovery of doubled haploid in sorghum. These strides have enriched the overall quality of sorghum crops and equipped farmers with the tools they need to boost productivity and profitability.

**Markets of Value:** The Sorghum Checkoff has been a catalyst in fostering sorghum sales to China by collaborating with the U.S. Grains Council to address trade issues and carve out new market opportunities. Efforts in market research and promotion of the unique health benefits of sorghum have propelled demand for the sorghum

internationally, thereby driving sales. The inclusion of sorghum in the USDA Food Buying Guide is another significant victory, amplifying its presence in the food industry.

**Sustainability Efforts:** Sorghum has proven itself as the Resource-Conserving Crop™, due to its inherent qualities including heat tolerance, erosion control, water-use efficiency and soil health promotion. The Sorghum Checkoff is dedicated to accentuating these attributes through its commitment to research and innovation.

**Leadership Development:** The Leadership Sorghum program is the program’s initiative for



cultivating future leaders of the sorghum industry with its sixth cohort already in progress. To date, the program has facilitated leadership training for 85 farmers.

**Promotion and Awareness:** The Sorghum Checkoff has been effective raising consumer awareness about sorghum's health, nutrition and versatility as a food and feed ingredient, thereby increasing demand. With a consistent presence at major trade shows and events, strategic marketing campaigns, and close collaboration with industry partners, the program continues to enhance the prominence of sorghum in the food industry and the public eye.

As we reflect on the past 15 years, the strides made by the United Sorghum Checkoff Program in transforming the sorghum industry stand as testament to the potential of collective effort and strategic innovation driven by producer leaders. As we look forward, the promise of further advancement in this sector shines bright.

For further insights into the accomplishments of the Sorghum Checkoff over the past 15 years, as well as its efforts to enhance the sorghum industry, visit [SorghumCheckoff.com/celebrating-15-years-of-innovation](https://SorghumCheckoff.com/celebrating-15-years-of-innovation).

## Export Sorghum Conference Sparks Global Interest

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program hosted the biennial 2023 Export Sorghum in collaboration with the U.S. Grains Council (USGC), Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission and Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board. This one-and-a-half-day event attracted 147 attendees, including potential and existing buyers from an array of nations, including Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea, Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya and China.

Serving as an ideal platform for international buyers, Export Sorghum facilitated a comprehensive understanding of sorghum markets providing insights into trade opportunities, contract negotiations, logistics and an in-depth look into U.S. sorghum production. Complementing the conference, the attendees also had the opportunity to witness U.S. sorghum production and its value chain through exclusive tours. These included visits to prestigious institutes like Iowa State University and Texas A&M University, along with various locations around Corpus Christi, Texas, and different parts of Kansas. These tours fostered relationships between U.S. sorghum farmers, suppliers and the international attendees, encouraging potential business collaborations.

The Export Sorghum event is pivotal to fostering U.S. sorghum sales globally by establishing strong ties between buyers and sellers. Further meetings with teams and sellers are in the pipeline, aimed at leveraging the relationships and business opportunities ignited during the event. The success of Export Sorghum reflects the Sorghum Checkoff's commitment to enhancing producer value by broadening international markets for U.S. sorghum.

The delegates engaged in discussions on sorghum supply and demand, its application in feed uses and other new applications. They also had the opportunity to meet more than seven sorghum exporters in one-on-one meetings. These business-to-business sessions allowed exporters to interact directly with representatives who are looking to include sorghum as a high value grain solution to their end-use products.

Adding to the event's grandeur, the USGC brought a delegation to Export Sorghum representing nearly 70 percent of China's total sorghum imports and arranged a post-conference tour for the participants. The team found great value in personally meeting growers and visiting the sorghum fields as it allowed them to gather firsthand information about sorghum production in Texas and Kansas. Additionally, they engaged with USGC members like the DeLong Co., the Andersons and Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) during their visits, facilitating fruitful discussions and the exchange of updates on the sorghum market.



# Sorghum Checkoff Amplifies International Presence at Global Sorghum Conference

The Sorghum Checkoff recently made its mark at the 2023 Sorghum in the 21st Century Global Sorghum Conference in Montpellier, France, a pivotal international event for the sorghum industry. The event was attended by Sorghum Checkoff CEO Tim Lust, Agronomy Director Brent Bean, Ph.D., and the Director of Communications Clint White. This gathering brought together an impressive congregation of 406 participants from 43 countries and 147 different institutions, spotlighting sorghum as a critical global crop.

The Sorghum Checkoff's involvement in this conference underscores the organization's commitment to enhancing value for sorghum producers through global collaboration, research and innovation. The conference brought together a diverse array of international experts, creating a fertile platform for the exchange of ideas and best practices to drive the advancement of the global sorghum sector.

The conference's global reach and the high level of engagement underscores the rising global interest in sorghum and reveals a wealth of opportunities for producers. As a leading authority for U.S. sorghum, the United Sorghum Checkoff Program's presence at such influential forums bolsters its mission to champion and enhance the sustainable

and profitable growth of the domestic sorghum industry for the benefit of sorghum growers across the United States.

In tandem with the conference, CEO Tim Lust embarked on a series of farm visits across Europe. By immersing himself in various agricultural settings, Lust gained insights and perspective into the diverse methods of sorghum production there. "Observing the similarities and differences in sorghum production worldwide is always a fascinating experience," Lust reflected.

Looking ahead, Texas Tech University is slated to host the Third Global Sorghum Conference in 2026, a collaborative effort between the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, the National Sorghum Producers and the university. This event will bring together global experts to further advance sorghum research and industry development with a clear focus on driving value and profitability for producers. Aiming to cover key topics related to sorghum and foster international collaboration to benefit sorghum farmers worldwide, the conference aligns perfectly with the United Sorghum Checkoff Program's mission to boost producer profitability and create new markets.

## SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

**Sept 12-14** Leadership Sorghum Class VI Session 3  
*Amarillo, TX*

**Oct 7-10** Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE)  
*Denver, CO*

**Oct 17-19** Sunbelt Ag Expo  
*Moultrie, Georgia*

For more events, visit [sorghumcheckoff.com/calendar](https://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](mailto:clint@sorghumcheckoff.com)



[@SorghumCheckoff](https://www.instagram.com/SorghumCheckoff)