



# NEWSLETTER

sorghumcheckoff.com | Summer Edition 2024

## Sorghum Added to WIC Food Package: USCP Celebrates Improved Nutrition Access for Children

**T**he United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the finalized updates to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), reflecting dietary and cultural preferences of its participants. Among the notable additions is sorghum, marking a significant milestone in the nutritional landscape for American children and families.

WIC plays a vital role in providing access to nutritious foods for low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, as well as infants and children up to the age of five. With sorghum now part of the expanded whole grain options on the national list of approved foods, an estimated 6.6 million participants will benefit from this versatile and nutrient-rich grain.

"This expansion will provide mothers and babies with essential nutrients for their growth and development. Sorghum's versatility allows it to be enjoyed in various ways, accommodating food preferences, developmental stages and dietary patterns of mothers and children," Sorghum Checkoff Director of Nutrition & Food Innovation Lanier Dabruzzi, MS, RD, LD, said in a release following the news. "Its inclusion in the expanded whole grain

offerings for the updated WIC food package underscores its importance as a nutrient-rich grain reflective of global foodways enjoyed in kitchens nationwide." Last year, the Sorghum Checkoff submitted formal comments during the Food and Nutrition Service's revision of the food package. This announcement represents the culmination of efforts to promote sorghum as a versatile and nutrient-rich grain suitable for public nutrition programs.

Sorghum, a naturally gluten-free whole grain, is a robust source of nutrition, offering fiber, plant-based protein, and antioxidants. Its recognition as a whole grain option by the WIC program aligns with the Sorghum Checkoff's mission to promote sorghum's nutritional benefits and support its integration into various food programs and initiatives. For additional information, including farm-to-school curriculum and kid-friendly recipes, please visit [SorghumCheckoff.com/educators](https://SorghumCheckoff.com/educators).



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# Sorghum Checkoff Directors Join Partners to Increase U.S. Sorghum Market Share in China

**T**he Sorghum Checkoff and U.S. Grains Council (USGC) embarked on a strategic promotional mission to China in June. This initiative aimed to capitalize on the growing demand for sorghum and to present compelling findings from a university study on the quality of U.S. sorghum to potential importers.

Sorghum is the primary ingredient in baijiu, the world's most popular distilled spirit, and is widely enjoyed in China. To boost U.S. sorghum exports and help meet the substantial demand for baijiu, the USGC commissioned a comprehensive report from Jiangnan University on the effectiveness of U.S. sorghum in baijiu production.

"The encouraging findings of this study will be utilized in Council programs to assure Chinese buyers that U.S. sorghum is a high-quality and abundant resource that will excite producers and consumers alike," USGC China Director Manuel Sanchez said. "China is already U.S. agriculture's largest market, but there is room for even higher sales due to the massive demand for sorghum here."

Sorghum Checkoff representatives on the mission included board director Macy Mueller and Past Chairman and USGC Asia Advisory Team (A-Team) Lead Adam Schindler, in addition to USGC Program Manager Ellie Yan and Cargill Sorghum Line Product Manager Kyle Hedrick.

Throughout the week, the group engaged with U.S. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) staff in Guangzhou and Beijing to coordinate strategies for increasing U.S. market share in China. They also met with several major grain import companies to present the study results and open new channels for future U.S. exports.

The team traveled to the Shandong Province, China's largest compound feed-producing region, for the 4th Annual U.S.-China Agriculture Roundtable on June 7. During this event, the USGC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Shandong Provincial Government, committing to continue building bridges between Chinese importers and U.S. producers through more promotional events. Schindler also presented on U.S. agriculture's commitment to sustainable farming practices during the morning session.



*United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) Past Chairman and U.S. Grains Council Asia Advisory Team Lead Adam Schindler participated in a discussion on U.S. agriculture's sustainability practices at the fourth annual U.S.-China Agriculture Roundtable in Shandong, China.*

The mission concluded with another series of meetings with corn and sorghum processing companies in Shandong. These discussions aimed to understand their specific needs for U.S. products and how the USGC and Sorghum Checkoff can facilitate future purchases.

"This mission was outstanding because it allowed the Council to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in the export chain, from promotional planning partners at ATO offices to importers and end-users," Sanchez said. "Having representatives from USCP and Cargill with us provided valuable insights on growing and logistical outlooks to buyers. This mission strengthened our understanding of market demands and how U.S. producers can meet them effectively."

The collaboration between the Sorghum Checkoff and USGC during this mission highlights a concerted effort to enhance the global reach of U.S. sorghum, ensuring its place in the competitive and demanding China market.

# Sorghum Checkoff Unveils 5-Year Strategic Plan

**T**he Sorghum Checkoff recently unveiled its updated 5-Year Strategic Plan, which received the green light from the Board of Directors at the 2023 December Annual Meeting. The producer-led board embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process designed to drive growth, foster innovation and cultivate leadership within the sorghum industry, positioning it for long-term success. "I am excited to see the culmination of our efforts in the release of the Sorghum Checkoff 5-Year plan," said newly elected Sorghum Checkoff Chairman Kendall Hodgson, a sorghum producer from Littler River, Kansas. "This plan not only charts a course for our organization's growth and development but also underscores our commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security. It's a testament to our collective vision and dedication to fostering innovation and resilience in the sorghum industry."

## The Strategic Pillars: Building a Future for Sorghum

The strategic plan is anchored in three core pillars, each targeting critical facets of the sorghum industry's progression and enhancement:

### **PREMIUM: Streamlining Sorghum Logistics through Direct Market Deployment**

The Sorghum Checkoff is committed to advancing the premium quality and accessibility of sorghum by innovating logistics solutions. By deploying direct markets, the program aims to streamline distribution channels, ensuring that sorghum reaches consumers efficiently without compromising its exceptional quality.

### **PRODUCTION: Technology-Driven Growth for Profitability**

Central to the Sorghum Checkoff's vision is the incorporation of cutting-edge technology to stimulate growth and profitability in the sorghum industry. These technology-driven initiatives aim to empower producers with the tools and resources necessary to optimize production processes, increase yield and maximize profitability, thereby equipping sorghum producers to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities in the evolving agricultural landscape.

### **PERCEPTION: Boosting Awareness and Bridging the Value Chain**

The Sorghum Checkoff acknowledges the cru-

cial role of perception in the future of sorghum. To enhance awareness and bridge the value chain, the program is dedicated to initiatives that underscore the inherent value of sorghum. By promoting its diverse applications and nutritional benefits, the Sorghum Checkoff aims to foster greater appreciation for this versatile crop among consumers, policymakers and industry stakeholders. Additionally, by bridging the value chain, the Sorghum Checkoff seeks to strengthen connections between producers, processors and end-users, creating a more cohesive and resilient sorghum industry.

### **Strategic Objectives: Prioritizing Growth and Sustainability**

The development of these three core pillars is instrumental to the 5-Year Strategic Plan, bringing multiple benefits to the Sorghum Checkoff:

**Empower Producers for Profitability:** Maximize potential profitability for producers by educating them on sustainable practices and solutions to production challenges.

**Innovative Sorghum Logistics Solutions:** Address transportation and logistical challenges with innovative approaches to improve market infrastructure, benefiting producers and delivering preferred qualities and quantities to customers.

**Drive Awareness of Sorghum's Value:** Enhance recognition of U.S. sorghum's value among all customers and communicate its role as a vital component in sustainable farming systems.

**Technology-Driven Growth:** Boost productivity by identifying and promoting new technologies through research, education and shared expertise.

**Deploy Direct Markets:** Develop mechanisms for U.S. sorghum producers to capture the potential value of direct market sales, providing essential information on market opportunities and risk management tools.

**Bridge the Value Chain:** Establish and lead an industry-wide structure to facilitate timely and credible communication among value-chain segments, fostering opportunities and building trust.

Learn more about the comprehensive roadmap to the Sorghum Checkoff's 5-Year Strategic Plan at [SorghumCheckoff.com](https://SorghumCheckoff.com).



# U.S. Soybeans and Sorghum as Key Partners in Poultry Nutrition Webinar

**T**he Sorghum Checkoff, in partnership with the U.S. Soybean Export Council Americas Team, hosted a webinar on June 19, 2024, titled "U.S. Soybeans and Sorghum as Key Partners in Poultry Nutrition." The event aimed to explore how U.S. sorghum can effectively complement U.S. soy in animal diets, particularly for poultry.

This unique opportunity provided valuable insights from international experts in the poultry industry to a targeted audience of junior-level animal nutritionists, feed formulators, feed mill management, live production operators and veterinarians from 11 countries. The countries included: Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Nigeria, Venezuela and the United States.

Presented in Spanish with live translation to English, the webinar attracted a broad audience, drawing more than 110 live viewers from 11 countries.

"The positive response to this webinar highlights the potential of U.S. sorghum as a sustainable energy source and functional feed ingredient in poultry diets and the importance of fostering international market relationships," Sorghum Checkoff Director of Feed Ingredient Utilization Brent Crafton said. "By collaborating with the U.S. Soybean Export Council Americas Team, we have successfully

demonstrated the benefits of integrating U.S. sorghum and U.S. soy into poultry nutrition programs throughout Latin America."

For those interested in viewing the recorded webinar, it is available at [SorghumCheckoff.com](https://SorghumCheckoff.com) or you can scan the QR code.

For more information about the benefits of sorghum in animal nutrition visit, [SorghumCheckoff.com/industry/livestock-feed](https://SorghumCheckoff.com/industry/livestock-feed).



## SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

**August 13** Sorghum U / Wheat U  
Wichita, Kansas

**September 13** Leadership Sorghum Application Deadline  
Close of business (5:00 pm CST)

**October 7-9** Export Exchange  
Fort Worth, Texas

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.



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