



# NEWSLETTER

sorghumcheckoff.com | Spring Edition 2025

## Sorghum – Can I Realistically Cut Costs in 2025?

By Sorghum Checkoff Agronomy Director Brent Bean, Ph.D.

This year presents unique challenges for farmers striving to turn a profit due to rising input costs and lower commodity prices. Recently, I wrote how sorghum has lower input costs compared to many other crops. For the sorghum farmer, there are potential areas where input costs could be trimmed further, however, these need to be considered strategically. By carefully evaluating hybrid selection, seed treatments, seeding rates, weed control and fertilizer application, savings may be achieved without sacrificing yield potential.

Sorghum seed is relatively inexpensive compared to other crops, and while the latest hybrids come at a premium, they often provide higher yields or valuable traits. For instance, if a new hybrid costs \$25 more per bag (600,000 seeds), this translates to just over 4 cents per 1,000 seeds. For a grower planting 45,000 seeds per acre, the additional expense is only \$1.87 per acre. Given the potential yield advantages of newer hybrids, cutting costs by choosing an older, cheaper variety may not be the best decision.

Most sorghum seed includes a base fungicide and a safener

that enables the use of group 15 herbicides such as s-metolachlor, acetochlor and dimethenamid. Recently, systemic insecticide treatments have become more common, adding \$30 to \$65 per bag in costs. While these treatments were crucial when sorghum aphids posed a significant threat, the pest is now less problematic, often appearing later in the growing season when a seed treatment would no longer be effective. Chinch bugs, however, can be a major early-season issue in some areas. If your farm experiences early pest pressure from chinch bugs or other pests, an insecticide seed treatment is essential. Otherwise, skipping it could save as much as \$4.90 at a 45,000 seed per acre seeding rate.

Seeding rates vary widely across the country and even from grower to grower in the same region. In seeding rate trials, it is often difficult to see a significant difference in yield without greatly varying the rate. This is because of sorghum's ability to tiller and produce more heads when planted at a low seeding rate, and its ability to produce more grain per head under favorable condi-

## WHAT'S INSIDE

1

Sorghum – Can I Realistically Cut Costs in 2025?

2

Ethan Triplett Joins the Sorghum Checkoff as Crop Improvement Director

3

First-Ever Sorghum Research Supplement in Journal of Food Science Fuels CPG Innovation

4

2024/2025 U.S. Sorghum Crop Earns No. 1 Certification for Sixth Consecutive Year



tions. Many growers may benefit from reducing seeding rates by 10–20% without significantly affecting yield. For a seed bag cost of \$170 and our example seeding rate of 45,000, this is a potential savings of \$1.27 to \$2.55 an acre. If you already plant at a low rate for your farm's potential, a seeding rate reduction may not be advisable.

Preemergence herbicide application is crucial for weed control in sorghum, but comparing costs of different products can lead to savings. For instance, two widely used premixes—atrazine plus s-metolachlor and atrazine plus acetochlor—offer similar weed control. A quick survey in my region indicated a price difference of up to \$5.00 per acre between these options. When comparing herbicides, labels should be carefully examined for differences in formulation and active ingredient. A 2SC formulation requires double the rate of a 4SC formulated product. A good example of active ingredient differences is s-metolachlor vs metolachlor. Although similar, a product with metolachlor will generally require a higher rate compared to a s-metolachlor containing product to get the same results.

Improving nitrogen efficiency allows for reduced fertilizer rates without compromising yield. A split nitrogen application can enhance efficiency and reduce total nitrogen needs by up to 25%. Consider applying 50% of nitrogen preplant, some as a starter, and the remaining 25–45 days post-emergence. This approach not only improves uptake efficiency but also provides the flexibility to adjust nitrogen rates based on real-time crop conditions.

In a year where every dollar counts, smart, strategic decisions can help sorghum farmers manage input costs without jeopardizing productivity. Carefully assessing hybrid choices, reconsidering seed treatments, adjusting seeding rates, comparing herbicide prices and improving nitrogen use efficiency can collectively make a significant financial difference. By considering these targeted savings strategies, farmers can navigate economic challenges while maintaining strong yields. For more insights into sorghum's agronomy insights, visit the [www.sorghumcheckoff.com](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com).

## Ethan Triplett Joins the Sorghum Checkoff as Crop Improvement Director

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) welcomes Dr. Ethan Triplett as its new crop improvement director, bringing extensive expertise in plant science, breeding and physiology to the organization. A native of Canyon, Texas, Triplett holds a Ph.D. in crop physiology from Texas Tech University and B.S. and M.S. degrees in plant science from West Texas A&M University. His background spans sorghum trait discovery, host-plant resistance mechanisms and entomology, making him a key asset in advancing sorghum's genetic potential.

In his new role, Triplett will lead efforts to enhance sorghum genetics, improve production sustainability and drive innovation in crop improvement. His work will focus on identifying early-stage opportunities for partnerships and technological advancements, ensuring sorghum remains a top choice for producers and industry stakeholders.

"Ethan's deep expertise in crop physiology and plant breeding aligns perfectly with our mission

to advance sorghum's potential," said Norma Ritz Johnson, executive director of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. "His leadership will be instrumental in identifying cutting-edge innovations that strengthen sorghum's competitiveness and long-term viability."

Triplett is passionate about scientific innovation and its practical application in agriculture, and he is committed to supporting producers with research-driven solutions that enhance yield, resilience and profitability. His leadership in crop improvement will play a vital role in ensuring sorghum continues to thrive as a competitive and sustainable crop in today's agricultural landscape.

For more information on USCP's efforts in sorghum innovation and crop improvement, visit [www.sorghumcheckoff.com](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com).

# First-Ever Sorghum Research Supplement in Journal of Food Science Fuels CPG Innovation

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) has reached a groundbreaking milestone with the publication of a special supplement in the *Journal of Food Science*, titled "Sorghum in Human Health." This first-of-its-kind compilation brings together extensive research on sorghum's nutritional benefits, solidifying its role as a powerful, health-promoting grain.

Funded by USCP, the supplement serves as a key resource for both food manufacturers and consumers, shedding light on sorghum's potential as a nutrient-rich ingredient. It emphasizes sorghum's unique benefits, including its ability to enhance diet quality, support overall health and thrive as a domestic, drought-tolerant crop.

"Sorghum provides a nutrient-dense food source for humans and should be considered as a key ingredient when developing new food products," said James Painter, PhD, RDN, the supplement's Guest Editor. "This compilation is designed to inspire food innovators to incorporate sorghum into a variety of new products."

The supplement features three pivotal research articles: "A Review of the Health Benefits and Food

Science Applications of Sorghum," "Sorghum Phytonutrients and Their Health Benefits: A Systematic Review from Cell to Clinical Trials," and "Current and Potential Future Uses of Sorghum to Increase Nutrient Density for Human Foods."

These studies highlight sorghum's role in disease prevention and management, particularly for conditions like diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

"We are proud to showcase the rigorous research demonstrating sorghum's powerful health benefits," said Lanier Dabruzzi, MS, RD, LD, Director of Nutrition & Food Innovation at Sorghum Checkoff. "This supplement underscores sorghum's role in a 'food as medicine' approach to health and provides a roadmap for food manufacturers to integrate sorghum into their product portfolios."

For more insights into sorghum's health benefits and food in-

novation potential, visit [www.sorghumcheckoff.com](http://www.sorghumcheckoff.com). To explore the full "Sorghum in Human Health" supplement, visit <https://ift.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17503841/89/S1>.

## Journal of Food Science

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Special Issue  
Sorghum in Human Health Supplement



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### SORGHUM DISH SHOWCASE

Sorghum Biscuits with  
Sorghum Sausage Gravy



SCAN ME





# 2024/2025 U.S. Sorghum Crop Earns No. 1 Certification for Sixth Consecutive Year

The United Sorghum Checkoff Program is proud to share that the 2024-25 U.S. sorghum crop has received a No. 1 certification for the sixth consecutive year, according to the U.S. Grains Council's newly released Sorghum Quality Report. This achievement underscores the continued commitment of U.S. sorghum producers to delivering a high-quality, reliable product to buyers around the world.

The report includes analysis from samples collected across 22 counties in major sorghum-producing states. Results showed this year's crop had strong test weights, low levels of broken kernels and foreign material, and no detectable mycotoxins. Moisture content averaged 11.9 percent, with protein levels ranging from 11.1 to 13.2 percent, highlighting sorghum's strong nutritional profile.

These results demonstrate why U.S. sorghum is increasingly valued in global markets, especially in regions such as Asia and Mexico. Buyers turn to U.S. sorghum for its consistency, safety and versatility in applications ranging from livestock feed to food products and industrial uses.

The Sorghum Checkoff continues to invest

in research, education and market development to ensure producers are equipped to meet growing international demand and elevate the crop's market presence.

With another year of top-tier quality, U.S. sorghum strengthens its position as a dependable grain of choice on the global stage.

To download the full 2024-25 Sorghum Quality Report, visit [grains.org/sorghum\\_report/2024-2025-sorghum-harvest-quality-report/](https://grains.org/sorghum_report/2024-2025-sorghum-harvest-quality-report/).



## SORGHUM INDUSTRY EVENTS

**April 28-30** Petfood Forum  
*Kansas City, Missouri*

**May 26, July 4** Memorial Day & Independence Day  
*Office Closed*

**August 4-6** USCP Board Meeting  
*TBD*

For more events, visit [sorghumcheckoff.com/news-and-events/](https://sorghumcheckoff.com/news-and-events/)

## USCP MISSION

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



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