



NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS

# SORGHUM *Grower*

*Ensuring Sorghum's Profitability*

February 2007

**IN THE PIPELINE:**  
SELECT MAX<sup>®</sup> TOLERANT  
GRAIN SORGHUM

DEALING WITH THE  
"NEW" GRAIN MARKET

ETHANOL FUELING  
SORGHUM DEMAND

FORAGE SORGHUM...  
MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

SORGHUM'S FULL  
LEGISLATIVE PLATE

**CREAM  
OF THE  
CROP**

Tips from Top  
Sorghum Producers



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# FEATURES

## In the Pipeline: **Select Max<sup>®</sup> Tolerant Grain Sorghum** 2

The National Grain Sorghum Foundation is working to develop a new type of non-GMO grain sorghum that will give growers more options for grass control in their sorghum fields.

## Cream of the Crop: **Tips from the Top Sorghum Producers** 6

Learn some new tricks from the winners of the 2006 National Sorghum Producers Yield and Management Contest.

# DEPARTMENTS

<b>Sorghonomics:</b> Dealing with the "New" Grain Market	14
<b>Sorghum Markets:</b> Ethanol Fueling Sorghum Demand	16
<b>Lab to Cab:</b> Forage Sorghum...More Bang for Your Buck	18
<b>Capitol Hill:</b> Sorghum's Full Legislative Plate	20
<b>NSP Update</b>	21
<b>SORGHUM Notes</b>	22

## Featured on the Cover: James and Dana Born Family

We thought this picture was worthy of top billing because we believe it represents what's right about America's family-owned sorghum farms. James and Dana Born of Perryton, Texas truly operate as a team to get the work done to support their family. They placed third nationally in the no till, non irrigated category of the 2006 National Sorghum Producers Yield and Management Contest. Pictured with them are their three sons: Ethan (5), Lonnie (12), and Evan (1). Many thanks to Terry Peak of Peak Photography in Perryton, Texas for so graciously allowing us to use the photo.



## Ensuring Sorghum's Profitability

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# Select Max<sup>®</sup> Tolerant Grain Sorghum

By Christi Scherler

Ask any sorghum producer about his most challenging production issue and you're likely to hear something like... "Shattercane and johnsongrass, but other grasses are a close second."

For sorghum grower Bill Greving who farms near Prairie View in north central Kansas, it's exactly that.

Greving said that to manage his grass issue, last crop year he moved some acres to corn that he would have normally planted to sorghum.

"It probably cost me 40-50 bushels per acre in lost yield. I could have yielded better with sorghum and at \$3.00 a bushel, that's a pretty significant loss."

He said that a combination of lack of rainfall at pollination time and too much heat on the corn accounted for much of the loss.

"This was probably an unusual year, even with the last seven years of drought. It's happened two to three other times, not that to extent, not that much yield loss."

Greving said that sorghum is more drought resistant and in most years outperforms corn. "Planting sorghum in our area, given the heat that we have in July and August and the inconsistency of adequate rainfall in those months, just allows us to extend that window. A sorghum plant will stand and wait for a rain to come. It will also tolerate heat."

"Plus, we have savings in seed costs of \$25-\$30 an acre to plant the crop. With the price fairly close to corn in our area, upfront costs on corn seed in a dryland situation is getting almost prohibitive. On irrigated, you pretty well know how much you can pull out of that, but you don't do that in a dryland situation."



Bill Greving with wife Diana

**"We'll have an option to use another herbicide in our rotation to control weeds. To me, that's important."**

"Every time we have a weed problem, we reduce yields. And since we grow sorghum under less rainfall than other crops, the competition from weeds causes us even greater losses because the weeds have a tendency to go after that moisture faster than the sorghum does."

According to Maunder, current grass control options for sorghum producers are incomplete and expensive.

Greving, who serves on the (NSP) board and also on the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, agrees.

"We just haven't had the herbicide options in sorghum. We've continued to lose sorghum acres in the U.S. over the past 20 years and one of those reasons, especially in the last 10-15 years, has been the introduction of glyphosate-tolerant corn, soybeans and cotton."



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### THE PROBLEM

Dr. Bruce Maunder, President of the National Grain Sorghum Producers Foundation (NGSPF) and formerly Sorghum Research Director/Breeder for DEKALB Genetics, is also keenly aware of the opportunities and challenges facing sorghum producers.

## THE PLAN

To combat grain sorghum grass control issues, the NSP-affiliated Foundation is collaborating with San Diego-based Cibus, LLC and Valent U.S.A. Corporation to develop a non-GMO grain sorghum with herbicide tolerance to Select Max® Herbicide with Inside Technology™.

“Our partnership with Cibus and now Valent will allow for much-needed technology development in our crop,” said Maunder. “Once it makes its way into producer fields, it should help increase both yields and profitability for sorghum producers. It’s going to just enable sorghum to be a better fit for the producer and give them more ease of control. As with any new product, it has to be good for the farmer.”

NSP CEO Tim Lust agrees with Maunder. “This is an exciting project. With new grass control options, producers like Bill will begin considering planting sorghum in fields where that may not be an option now. This is a clear win for sorghum producers.”

## THE TECHNOLOGY

Maunder said that Cibus was able to develop herbicide resistance without going to another species. This important for sorghum exports, because sorghum will still be classified as non-GMO.

According to a Cibus press release, the first market entry using the Rapid Trait Development System (RTDS) technology is slated for 2009 when Cibus will introduce a herbicide-tolerant canola seed followed by herbicide-tolerant rice in 2010.

According to Cibus President Keith Walker, RTDS manipulation is so precise that it is similar to altering a letter in a single word contained within a large book. “But

the end result is a vastly improved and environmentally-safe plant seed.”

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Growers like Greving might have a new over-the-top, post-emerge grass control option that will not only be easier to use, but also help control volunteer glyphosate-tolerant crops and glyphosate-

resistant weeds.

“If this is successful and we get it into farmers’ fields, I think it could be the biggest breakthrough since safened milo seed 25 years ago,” said Greving. “We’ll have an option to use another herbicide in our rotation to control weeds. To me, that’s important. I’m confident that Cibus will be able to do what we’ve hired them to do.”

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