



# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT

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# FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Dear Kansas Sorghum Producer,

This past year delivered the biggest challenges in memory for KSP's producer membership, for our friends and neighbors across our communities, and for the health and vitality of our region's entire grain-handling infrastructure. It was a year that reminded all of us of similar challenges we faced down together in 2018 and overcame. Like 2018, 2025 rings out why organizations like ours exist and exemplifies the times which organizations like ours were built for. In many ways, 2018 prepared our sorghum organizations for 2025. I will recount a personal example:

In early 2018, I was a young staffer from southwest Kansas working within our delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives. In February of that year, virtually overnight and throughout that Spring, each day centered around one singular topic in my ag and trade portfolio and due to my Member's home state of Kansas: lost market access for U.S. sorghum. I saw firsthand from a legislative staff's perspective the incredible odds your modest agricultural advocacy organizations overcame—KSP at the grassroots and NSP at the “grasstops”—in order to reclaim access to your largest international market. The associations' fingerprints were *everywhere*: from constituent meetings in House office buildings; in the backrooms of closed-door, staff-only meetings of Committees; commanding central focus in oversight hearings with executive officials; and, shaping public narrative across national media with facts and figures. I realized quickly this was a case study of a sophisticated operation, which I found myself on the receiving-end, demonstrating the value of your associations and the returns to you through markets and policy. These were impactful organizations I wanted to be a part of in the future. By the Fall of 2020 and throughout 2021, I had joined your staff with a year under my belt as your Program Director for Kansas Sorghum. Thank you for allowing me to work for you.

I witnessed then from my current perspective on your staff how your earlier advocacy efforts through your sorghum associations—like fighting for trade deals, bolstering domestic markets like bioethanol and food-grade, and positioning the industry for opportunity—lunged sorghum producers forward very quickly through robust market demand and historic interior basis levels up to 2024. *Those were good times and you made the impact.*

2025 has been a challenging year, but together with NSP, KSP staff and leadership have worked tirelessly to position you for a strong 2026 and beyond. Your state and national sorghum associations remain active on a daily basis with policy makers in Washington, DC. KSP is highly respected for our thoughtful, deliberate engagement in Topeka and we are active with programming across the rural Kansas communities our key state legislators represent when we see them in the Statehouse each January. Efforts to strengthen local, domestic market channels through enhanced bioethanol policy in DC and Topeka will provide value-added, stable demand for High Plains sorghum production and results are in sight. Tireless work to supply timely data for the frenetic pace of the administration's pursuits to make new trade deals, coupled with “red-carpet” operations bringing new foreign buyers into Kansas provide real opportunities for diversification and set up competitive foreign demand. Lastly, 12 months of diplomatic engagement across multiple fronts has regained sorghum market access to China *for a third time in a decade* in recent weeks. At time of this writing, several days before the New Year, China has officially re-entered the market for your product with multi-vessel purchases. The measure now becomes the scale and magnitude.

From your KSP staff, we wish you (*and are together working towards*) good times again in 2026.

Sincerely,

*Adam York*

Adam York  
Kansas Sorghum Producers CEO



# WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1976 and reincorporated in 1994 as the Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association, we are now known simply as **Kansas Sorghum Producers (KSP)** to better represent the breadth and versatility of the entire Kansas sorghum industry.

KSP empowers growers by advocating on legislative, regulatory, and industry issues, with efforts funded by membership dues and industry partnerships.

Today, KSP is the largest state-level sorghum association in the U.S., representing the billion-dollar Kansas sorghum industry and ensuring active member involvement in legislative and regulatory matters.



▲ Above: KSP Board Director, Kent Winter, Mount Hope, KS, and President, Shane Ohlde, Palmer, KS, greet Representative Gary White (KS-115), at KSP's annual Sorghum Day at the Statehouse earlier this year.

## PRESIDENT

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# 2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

KSP is committed to promoting and improving the general profitability of Kansas sorghum farmers, by developing and maintaining domestic and international markets to utilize Kansas and U.S. sorghum production. KSP is dedicated to focusing attention and resources on the areas that most vitally affect production, marketing, education, research and expanded domestic and international demand. The combined effects of these efforts are essential in achieving increased profitability of Kansas sorghum production.

Key areas of support include increased funding and emphasis on research for improved sorghum yields, particularly through the continued funding of the Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program (CSIP). KSP supports sorghum-based bioethanol by advocating for increased availability of all blended fuels, including E-15 and higher, and the expansion of blender pumps. In terms of taxation, KSP supports the current method of agricultural property taxation, the sales tax exemption for agricultural items, and relief such as eliminating estate taxes and supporting key agricultural tax credits. We also oppose efforts to shift other forms of taxation to property tax or modify the use-value appraisal methodology.

To view proposed 2026 draft policy resolutions, scan the QR code. ►



# KSP'S "TOP 3" OF 2025

- May 2024:**  
 KSP staff and leadership meet with Governor's administration as stakeholders ahead of new 10-Year State Water Plan strategic implementation.
- Summer 2024:**  
 KSP staff and membership attend 11 out of 14 "Water Local Consults" across Kansas with our message to state agencies: *crop option and sorghum advancement is key to the State's economic and resource conservation goals taken together in tandem.*  
 Adjacently, CSIP 2.0 matched investments among private partners aligned and pledges secured, contingent upon increased State of Kansas investment.
- October 2024:**  
 ✓ Kansas Department of Agriculture recommends \$1 million sorghum investment match in agency's FY2026 budget request in order to unlock an additional \$4 million from private sector.
- January 16, 2025:**  
 ✓ Governor Laura Kelly sends the sorghum investment in her FY2026 budget to the Legislature as part of the State Water Plan.
- January 27, 2025:**  
 KSP hosts Day at the Statehouse—under a new and reformed Legislative-led budget process, sorghum producers must work the investment into Legislature's FY2026 budget bill language (labeled HB2007) across both chambers.
- January 31, 2025:**  
 ✓ House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee approves sorghum investment, sent to House Appropriations Committee.
- February 4, 2025:**  
 ✓ House Appropriations Committee approves sorghum investment; sent to House floor.
- February 19, 2025:**  
 ✓ House of Representatives approves sorghum investment; referred to Senate Committees.
- March 5, 2025:**  
 ✓ Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee approves sorghum investment; goes to Senate Ways & Means (i.e. Appropriations).
- March 13, 2025:**  
 ✓ Senate Ways & Means Committee approves final action on Agriculture budget and sorghum investment, sent to Senate floor.
- March 28, 2025:**  
 ✓ House and Senate approve conferenced FY2026 budget bill (now labeled SB125) including the sorghum investment match, awaiting Governor's signature.
- April 10, 2025:**  
 ✓ Governor signs FY2026 budget bill into law. Highlights sorghum investment in press release.

## #1: Unlocking the Power of CSIP 2.0

KSP led the charge to leverage nearly \$6 million in foundational investment to renew the U.S. sorghum industry's premier crop improvement engine, the Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program (CSIP), by unlocking a multi-million dollar match challenge through the Kansas Legislature through our champions in the Statehouse. Evidenced in the timelines to the left, the advocacy effort was green across the board.

See what CSIP 2.0 means for producers today and tomorrow. Read more about how CSIP 2.0 got done in the April 2025 *Sorghum Leader* newsletter [here](#).



## #2: Supporting Intl. Harvest Showcase

KSP supported the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission in tandem with the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Ag Marketing Division in hosting numerous buyers into Kansas. Together, we showcased this year's record breaking yield potential to 50+ companies across 15 nations over 7 productive days spanning east-to-west state borders. From these interactions, KSP leaders work ongoingly to inform state and federal policy makers about these destinations' market dynamics.

Read more about this market development work in the September 2025 *Sorghum Leader* newsletter [here](#).



## #3: Record New-Membership Growth

When you join or renew your Kansas and National Sorghum Producers Association membership, you can be confident about the impact you and your fellow members make in shaping policies critical to your bottom line. Increasingly, you are in very good company.

In 2025, combined efforts between KSP and NSP produced the strongest membership recruitment year on record (post-1990). Join, renew, or increase your membership tier today for 2026 [here](#).

# THE COLLABORATE INVESTMENT INTO “CSIP 2.0”

Time spent with leadership and staff of Kansas Sorghum quickly surfaces one topic: 2016's grassroots initiative coined the **Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program**, otherwise known as CSIP. With the CSIP platform securing a multi-million investment of \$5.8 million made possible through public-private partnerships with matches from the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, and an enhanced match directly from the Kansas Legislature, these funds will allow CSIP to maintain its critical role in sorghum research and crop advancement through 2036. Securing the foundation for what is now taking shape as CSIP 2.0 resulted from a network of earnest partners working collaboratively and diligently the past 24 months. Together, farmer leadership of the Commission and KSP operated in harmony to forge the future of sorghum improvement alongside securing a water-smart crop for Kansas through CSIP.

Starting in the 2024 spring planting season through summer 2025, these two farmer-led Kansas Sorghum organizations secured a partnership with the State of Kansas to demonstrate a significant match of farmer investment for CSIP 2.0. In May 2024, KSP engaged with the Governor's administration as key stakeholders for a new 10-Year State Water Plan, which synchronized with a potential second decade of CSIP if the will and the way to do so presented itself. The will and the way presented itself, as readers will recall, Kansas Sorghum's CEO Adam York—writing in the [Fall 2024 Sorghum Grower Magazine](#)—that with the success of CSIP's first decade, the answer to the question of “Why stop here?” became “We keep going.”

Setting the stage (for 2025) throughout 2024, KSP attended nearly each of the 14 “Water Local Consults” public forums conducted across Kansas with the message crop options and sorghum advancements align with the state's economic and resource conservation goals. During this same period, efforts to secured matched investments and pledges from private partners moved forward, but contingent upon an increased leveraged investment from the State of Kansas.

Sorghum farmers' vision for leveraged crop improvement melded with a shared vision among Kansas Department of Agriculture's leadership, and

through the agency's budget request of a \$1 million sorghum investment match in the agency's FY2026 proposed budget, which, when appropriated, unlocked an additional \$4 million from the private sector. Governor Laura Kelly agreed with the agency and included the sorghum investment in her FY2026 budget proposal, which was then sent to the Legislature as part of the State Water Plan.

**But what does CSIP mean for growers in Kansas?** Since its start in 2016, [CSIP 1.0 has a proven track record](#) as a platform leveraging nearly \$10 million in additional sorghum research funds for the industry. CSIP drives innovation through key initiatives that include discovering elite seed material to increase yield in water-stressed environments, developing high value seed traits like unique proteins or starches, and resistance to pests such as sugarcane aphid and chinch bugs. As evidence of CSIP's impact, genetic marker traits enabled by the platform are also now used in the development of over 50% of U.S. sorghum industry hybrids. CSIP builds strategic partnerships throughout the sorghum value chain, from seed development to end-users. Recent future-focused initiatives hone in on sorghum forages for the U.S. beef and dairy sectors, illustrating the program's collaborative approach.

“The multi-million dollar investment in CSIP 2.0 is more than just a win for research; it's a direct investment in the livelihoods of sorghum producers at the farm gate,” said Brant Peterson, Commission chairman of Stanton County in early 2025. “The hard work by Kansas Sorghum staff and producer leaders to secure this funding will translate directly to our bottom lines as growers well into the future.”

The successful matched challenge to unlock CSIP 2.0 isn't also just a win on paper for Kansas; it's a game-changer for every sorghum producer in the Sorghum Belt. This multi-million dollar investment provides the foundation for sorghum innovation over the next decade (and beyond), translating directly into more resilient and profitable U.S. crop production for years to come. It's a clear signal that CSIP will double down on its role as the industry's standard and a catalyst for sorghum research, development, and producer success for decades to come.

# PUSHING YOUR PRIORITIES THROUGH: KSP'S 2025 D.C. FLY-INS

On November 18-20, with months of planning and disciplined intake of information from our members and from the weekly news cycles, KSP's officers focused exclusively on market and trade assistance policies during our annual DC Fly-In. We pushed for additive trade deals, stronger biofuel policy with year-round sale of E15 across the nation, and reiterated the reality that the farm economic outlook in Kansas remains bleak. Officers Kelsey Baker, Brian Younker, and Shane Ohlde, as well as CEO Adam York attended.

While we know our Kansas delegation understands the challenges 2025 brought to our farms with sorghum piles across their districts, we ensured your messages and sentiments rang out in meetings with each of our six delegates in the U.S. House and Senate nonetheless to give them wind at their backs.

Importantly, we also utilized our time to meet with new executive staff at the White House and USDA. These meetings with key Trump administration staff were made possible through proactive relationship-building fostered by our talented NSP staff in Washington, DC over the past year.

While one of our officers could not make the trip due to on-farm responsibilities to finish out the harvest, KSP officer Andy Hineman was with us in spirit, stocking us with blow-up photos of sorghum piles in Scott and Lane Counties along Highways 83 and 96 that we left directly with White House, USDA, and Congressional staff after our meetings. Unless you see this year's piles each and every day, they unfortunately do not exist in many of the minds of those in DC. We made sure awareness of the build-up situation exists in the minds of federal staff.



# HIGHLIGHTING YOUR KSP STAFF

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While your KSP staff is a small team, we work diligently on behalf of our members across Kansas:

CEO Adam York grew up on a Southwest Kansas farm and ranch, delivering extensive experience from prior roles as a congressional staffer for multiple Members of Congress in Washington, D.C., Government Affairs Director for National Sorghum Producers, Sustainability Director for the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, and Government Relations Director for the Kansas Board of Regents.

Maddy Meier, rooted in her family's row crop and cattle operation and a 2022 Kansas State University graduate in agricultural communications, serves as the Senior Director of Communications, managing strategic communications, brand development, producer outreach, and is a member of the current KARL Class XVII Program.

Andrew Le currently serves as the Manager of Industry and Regulatory Affairs, a role he returned to after serving as KSP's Collegiate Food and Ag Policy Fellow this Spring. Originally from Wichita, Le is passionate about food systems and is pursuing concurrent degrees and Masters courses in political science and global food systems leadership at Kansas State University.



*Adam York*



*Maddy Meier*



*Andrew Le*

## ANNUAL KSP MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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In 2026, KSP celebrates 50 years of championing the voice of the Kansas sorghum producer. As we honor this milestone, we invite all members of the Association to join us for our **Annual Membership Meeting in Salina on Thursday, Jan. 29, at 5:30 p.m. at Martinelli's**. Board directors and policy resolutions will also be considered by members. While there is no cost to attend, attendees should [RSVP here](#) so staff may have a headcount for the reception and meal (if you know Martinelli's, you know you won't want to miss).



## SORGHUM STATE PODCAST

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The Sorghum State Podcast, hosted by KSP's Maddy Meier and Adam York, is a dedicated audio platform on behalf of the Sorghum State. The podcast focuses on a range of topics critical to sorghum producers, including policy, market advancement, research and development, international trade, and updates from the organization. In 2025, the Sorghum State Podcast reached new heights in listener engagement and remains one of the best ways to hear from your staff about our work on your behalf each month.



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KSP STAFF AND LEADERSHIP RAISED A  
RECORD-BREAKING

**\$91,500**

IN FY2025\*

TO SUPPORT THE WORK  
OF THE ASSOCIATION

\*July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



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