



# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT

---

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2026

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

**3**

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

**4**

WHO WE ARE

**5**

CHECKOFF STRUCTURE

**6**

KANSAS SORGHUM ASSESSMENTS & PRODUCTION

**7**

FY2025 BUDGET AND  
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

**8-9**

INDUSTRY ADVANCEMENTS

**10**

SORGHUM COMMISSION STAFF



# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Fellow Sorghum Grower:

As we reflect on our challenges and our progress in this past year, the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission has remained highly focused on utilizing your checkoff investments to confront the realities of lost markets and high costs of production. Driving global demand through international market diversification remains our top priority in tandem with maintaining market access to our historically significant customers in China. Meanwhile, we are simultaneously investing in vital research to foster profitability through enhanced productivity and end-use here at home.

A major highlight of our FY2025 trade efforts is our concerted push into the Indian poultry market. Working alongside state, national and international partners, we developed online and on-site poultry nutrition and feed manufacturing courses tailored for top poultry nutritionists and feed millers from India. The Indian livestock industry is actively seeking affordable, non-genetically modified feed alternatives, and Kansas sorghum is perfectly positioned to help resolve their current coarse grain shortfall, with recent trade announcements bolstering our strategic investments.

We are also making significant strides in Latin America's rapidly growing pet food sector. This spring, we hosted a trade team of pet food nutritionists from Colombia and Guatemala into Kansas to showcase the performance sorghum provides to pet diets. To tie these global relationships together, the Sorghum Commission co-hosted Export Sorghum 2025 last September in San Antonio, bringing international grain buyers directly to the table with Kansas traders to convert sales at a time of historic yield—and historically low prices per bushel—equating to significant and competitive buying opportunities that resulted in real-time sales to destinations like Spain, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and others.

Personally, I hosted at my Stanton County farm rising executives from the largest swine processors in the world located in China. We are thrilled to report China has reopened its market to U.S. sorghum with large sales in recent weeks this marketing year.

While international trade effectively sets our sorghum price floor in overall markets, our targeted research investments are designed to protect your yields and profitability by enhancing your efficiency and tackling costs of production. In FY2025, the Commission invested in critical research, including integrated weed management strategies to combat herbicide-resistant Palmer amaranth and kochia, and new on-farm trials to improve our management of stalk rot diseases. The Commission is also supporting the rapid advancement of genetic traits like sugarcane aphid resistance and chilling tolerance, and exploring water-efficient forage sorghum integration for the rapid expansion of High Plains dairies. As the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission remains a vital part of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program under the federal sorghum assessment for both grain and forage, we see this investment to support value-added dairy production as a critical future-forward proposition to our state's economic and resource conservation goals in tandem.

Through these targeted trade missions, educational programs, and farm-gate research projects, your Sorghum Commission is actively cultivating future customers, regaining traditional customers, and ensuring a strong, reliable future for the Kansas sorghum industry, and by extension, the U.S. sorghum industry, as one out of every two bushels of sorghum in America comes from Kansas growers.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our industry and we wish you prosperity in 2026 with a resilient and profitable sorghum crop.

Sincerely,



Brant Peterson  
**KGSC Chairman**  
Johnson City, KS

# WHO WE ARE

---

The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission is committed to sorghum promotion, research and information designed to strengthen, expand and develop new foreign and domestic markets for sorghum. Its Board of Directors is composed of sorghum producers elected from various regions of the state, ensuring diverse representation. Board members serve three-year terms and are elected by their constituents.

---

## OFFICERS

---



Brant Peterson  
Chairman | District 3  
*Johnson*



Kevin Kniebel  
Vice Chair | District 8  
*White City*



Kevin Harris  
Secretary-Treasurer  
District 5  
*Abilene*

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---



Evan Lesser  
District 1  
*Palco*



Jon Berning  
District 2  
*Scott City*



Matt Benoit  
District 4  
*Damar*



Max Tjaden  
District 6  
*Clearwater*



Nicole Small  
District 9  
*Neodesha*



Clark Bibb  
At-Large  
*Coldwater*



Jeff Zortman  
At-Large  
*Fowler*



Blake Connelly  
At-Large  
First Purchaser  
*Offerle*

# CHECKOFF STRUCTURE

---

## THE UNITED SORGHUM CHECKOFF PROGRAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As the largest sorghum-producing state, Kansas holds a five-seat plurality on the 13-member United Sorghum Checkoff Program (USCP) Board of Directors, nominated in part by the Commission, a Certified Producer Organization (CPO) under the Sorghum Checkoff structure, and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Kansas Directors include:



Kim Baldwin  
McPherson

Kendall Hodgson  
Little River

Macey Mueller  
Halstead

Jeff Zortman  
Fowler

*\*There is currently one vacancy from the resignation of David Schemm, Sharon Springs.*

---

## THE CENTER FOR SORGHUM IMPROVEMENT

The Center for Sorghum Improvement manages the U.S. Sorghum Industry's premier crop genetic advancement instrument, the Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program (CSIP). Established in 2016 by the U.S. sorghum industry and the State of Kansas, CSIP serves as the cornerstone for U.S. sorghum innovation and leveraged resources nationally. Housed at Kansas State University, CSIP drives improvements in sorghum through enhanced yield, increased demand, and added value. New research has focused on developing trait packages for drought tolerance, weed control, and pest resistance to enhance sorghum profitability. A decade of CSIP has been transformative for the sorghum industry in Kansas.



## LEADERSHIP SORGHUM

USCP's Leadership Sorghum program is designed to develop future leaders in the sorghum industry by providing hands-on and classroom education on topics like research, marketing, and the value-added chain. Kansans in Leadership Sorghum Class VII include:

Jared Stegman, Dodge City  
Lesley Schmidt, Spearville  
Weston Schmidt, Syracuse



# KANSAS SORGHUM PRODUCTION

## ONE ASSESSMENT, TWO PRODUCER-FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

USDA established USCP in 2008 under the federal Commodity Research and Information Act of 1996. KGSC is a qualified state organization (QSO) eligible to receive federal sorghum checkoff dollars; there is no state sorghum checkoff in Kansas.

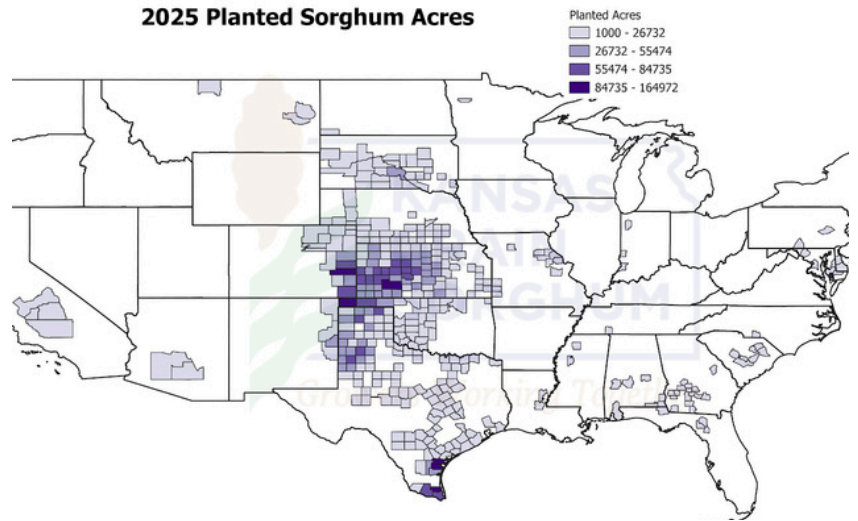
The national sorghum checkoff assessment is six-tenths of one percent the market value of a bushel of grain sorghum at first point of sale; and, thirty-five hundredths of one percent the market value of sorghum forage, silage, hay, haylage, and billets.

USCP collected approximately \$5.64 million in sorghum assessments in Kansas in Fiscal Year 2025 (Oct 1, 2024 - Sept 30, 2025). The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission received \$1,088,156.00 in passback funding for its FY2025 promotion and research investments.

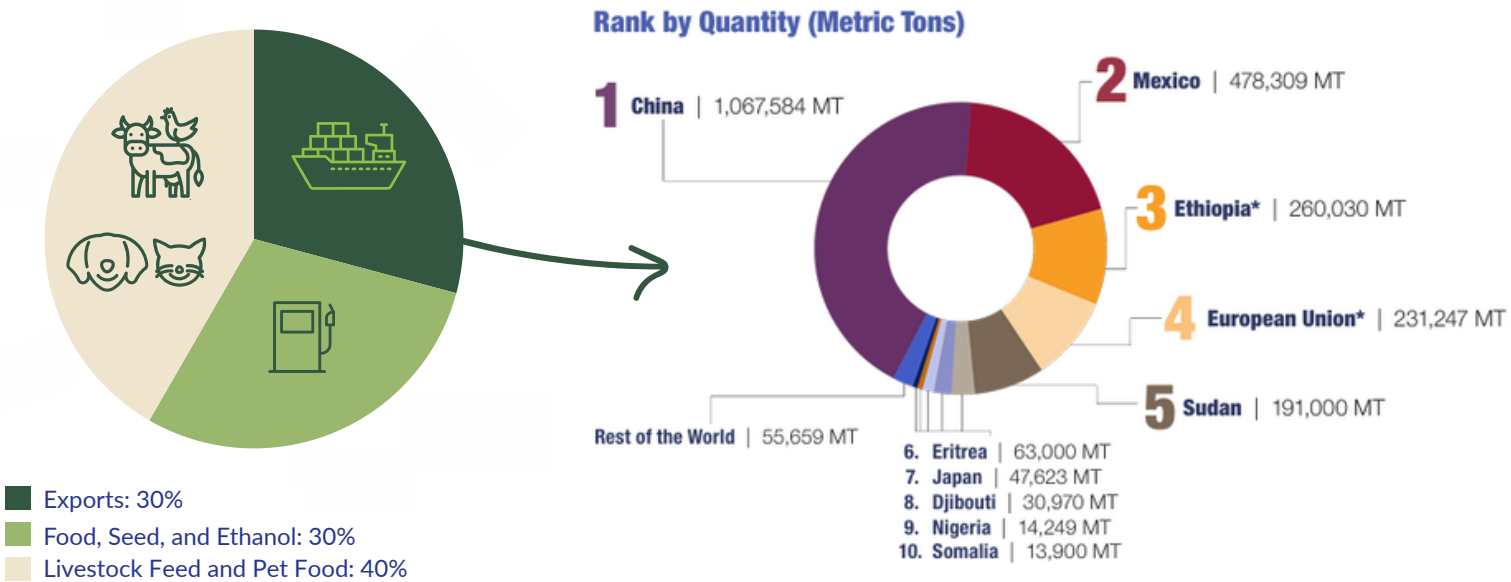
## PRODUCTION STATS

In fall 2025 for the current new crop, Kansas farmers harvested 2.8 million acres; producing a **record-breaking 252 million bushels and an average of 90 bushels per acre**, up from 182 million bushels in Market Year 2024/2025. Kansas ranks number one in U.S. sorghum production, producing 58 percent of the crop in Market Year 2025/2026.

2025 Planted Sorghum Acres



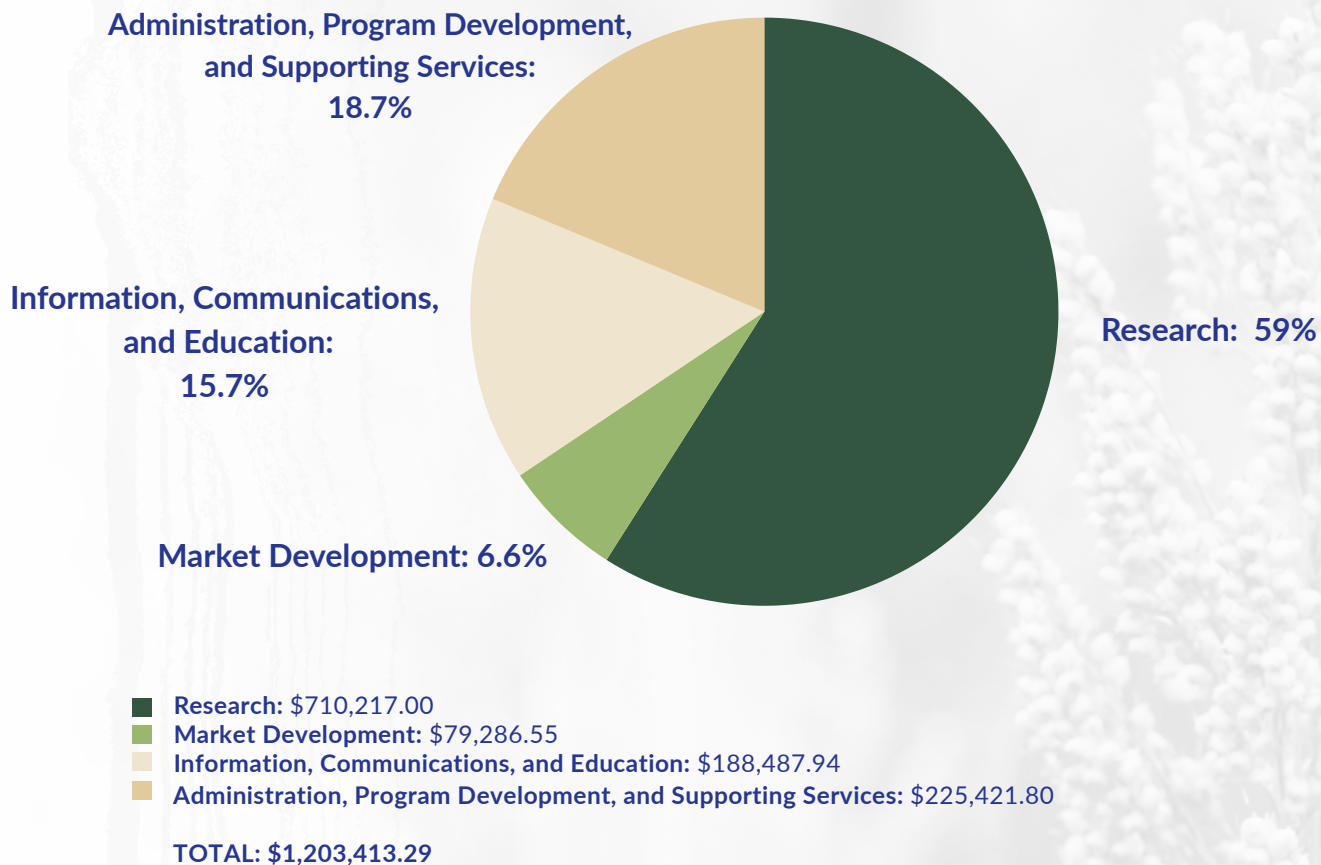
## MARKETING YEAR 24/25 DOMESTIC MARKET USAGE AND EXPORT DESTINATIONS



Source: USDA

Source: U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council

# FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET



## FY2025 INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

**CSIP 1.0 – Year 9 of 10:** Continued leveraged investments in research, markets, and outreach that directly supports sorghum profitability and demand for Kansas growers.

**STRAIT-KIN - Felderhoff:** Enhancing genomics research infrastructure and techniques that fast-track new sorghum traits like pest tolerance, stress tolerance, and end-use quality from the lab into commercial hybrids farmers can plant sooner.

**Swine Feeding Trials – Paulk:** Updates the real nutritional value of today’s modern sorghum varieties so U.S. swine nutritionists can confidently use the grain in higher inclusion rates, creating stronger feed demand.

**Nutrient Uptake – Haag:** Tests whether certain sorghum genetics (LGS1) can pull more nutrients from the soil, helping growers maintain yields with less fertilizer and enhanced profitability.

**Sorghum Connection Field Trials & Extension Program - Onofre:** Delivers hands-on, local management data generated across the universe of Sorghum Checkoff investments for farmers to use immediately to improve sorghum performance in their fields.

**U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council Program and IGP Institute Trade Facilitation:** Strengthens international trade relationships that builds international demand and technical utilization knowledge for Kansas sorghum.

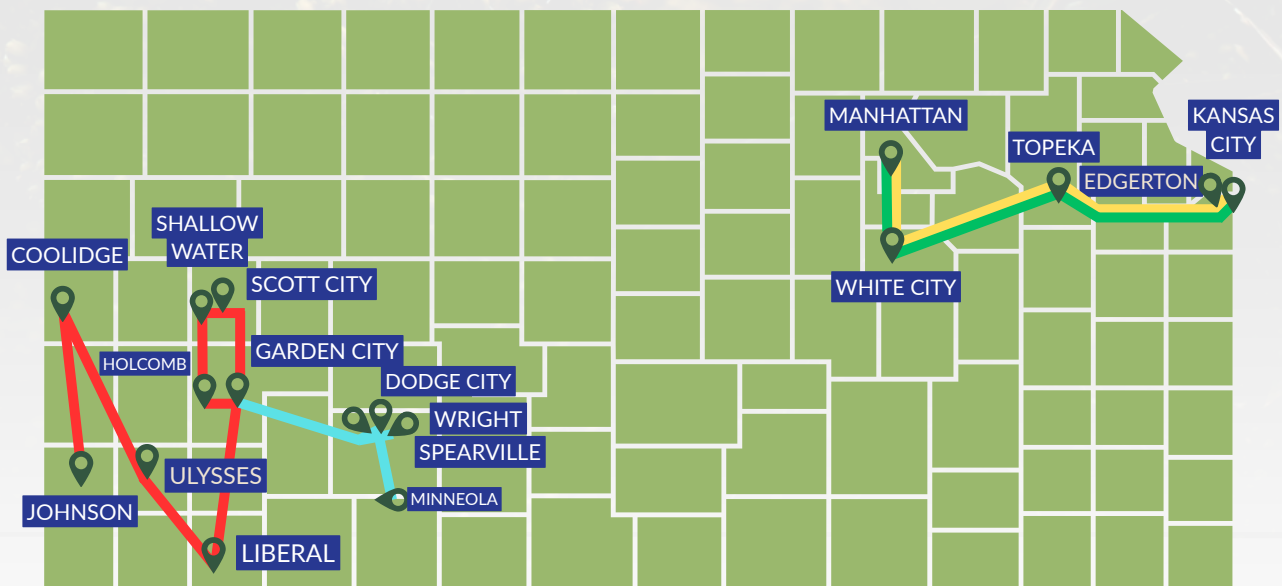
**Export Sorghum Conference:** Brings global grain buyers into Kansas for face-to-face exchange with U.S. sorghum leaders, converting relationships into exports.

**Strategic Water Initiatives:** Enhances sorghum-based production and marketing systems, including financial incentives and research, as a targeted response to Ogallala Aquifer depletion in southwest Kansas.

**Educational Initiatives:** Programs like Kansas Farm Food Connection, Kansas FFA, Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, and Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership Program connect the next generation to sorghum, agriculture, and rural leadership in Kansas.

# KANSAS SORGHUM HARVEST SHOWCASE BOOSTS TRADE RELATIONSHIPS

The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, alongside the Kansas Sorghum Producers Association and in tandem with the U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council, hosted buyers from nearly two dozen countries at the Export Sorghum Conference in San Antonio in September 2025, pairing educational sessions and port tours with Kansas-led farm and facility visits across the state. Delegations from Vietnam, Latin America, China, and regions spanning Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia toured export terminals, grain inspection labs, university research sites, farms, milling operations, and ethanol plants to see the full sorghum supply chain in action over a seven-day period. These hands-on experiences strengthened trust in U.S. sorghum's quality, reliability, and research-backed production while reinforcing existing trade relationships and opening new market opportunities for growers. **This showcase was the largest single-week in-bound trade mission in the Sorghum Commission's 50-year history.**



● CHINA  
DELEGATION ROUTE  
SEPT. 24-25

● MEXICO/LATIN AMERICA  
DELEGATION ROUTE  
SEPT. 25

● SOUTHEAST ASIA  
DELEGATION ROUTE  
SEPT. 19

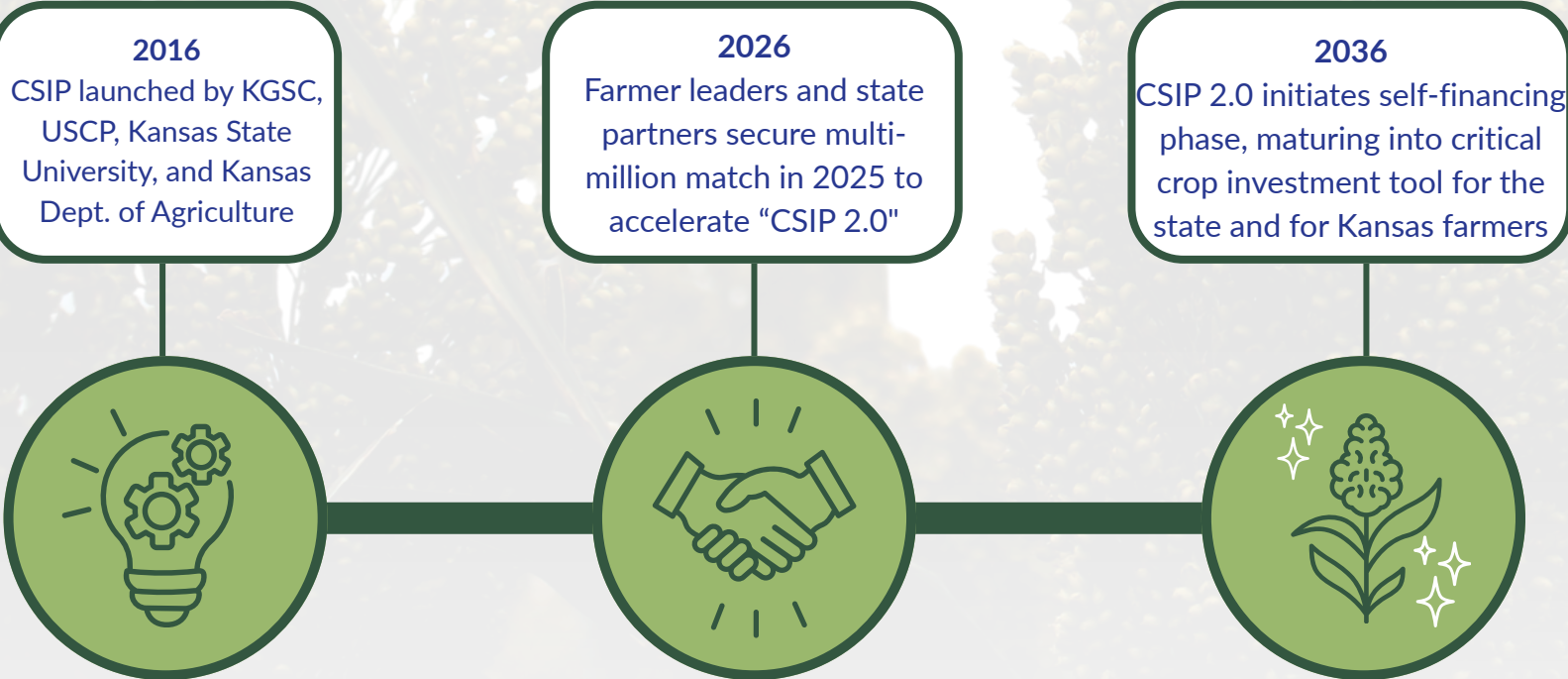
● EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND  
AFRICA DELEGATION ROUTE  
SEPT. 25

# CSIP 2.0: AN INVESTMENT UNIQUE TO KANSAS

The Collaborative Sorghum Investment Program (CSIP) advances yield, demand and value by accelerating farmer-focused trait development and market growth. Through stress-resilient genetics, expanded feed, fuel and food opportunities, and strategic seed innovation, CSIP strengthens U.S. sorghum’s on-farm performance and profitability with its center of gravity in Kansas, the Sorghum State. CSIP solves a longstanding problem unique to the U.S. sorghum industry among major feed grains by pooling farmer funds to attract philanthropic, federal, and especially private R&D funding into sorghum genetic advancement for commercialized results back to farmers, directed by farmers.

In its first decade capturing nearly \$10 million in additional active investments, CSIP has delivered measurable results: DropXL lines demonstrated an 8% yield increase with ¾-inch water savings; Sugarcane Aphid (SCA) tolerance markers adopted by seed companies for rapid introgression in response to devastating infestations; and key traits—including stable height, SCA 2.0 and chilling tolerance—have advanced into testing phases.

In 2025, the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission matched \$2 million with the State of Kansas to draw down an additional \$2 million from the United Sorghum Checkoff Program for CSIP 2.0, fueling the next decade of sorghum improvement across the U.S., centered in Kansas.



# MEET YOUR SORGHUM COMMISSION STAFF

---

## ADAM YORK, ADMINISTRATOR



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

## MADDY MEIER, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Rooted in her family's Kansas row crop and cattle operation and a 2022 Kansas State University graduate in agricultural communications, Meier 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, MANAGER OF INDUSTRY AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS



Le currently serves as the Manager of Industry and Regulatory Affairs, a role he returned to after serving as Kansas Sorghum's Flinchbaugh Food and Ag 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.

## MINDY WELLS, COLLEGIATE COMMUNICATIONS FELLOW

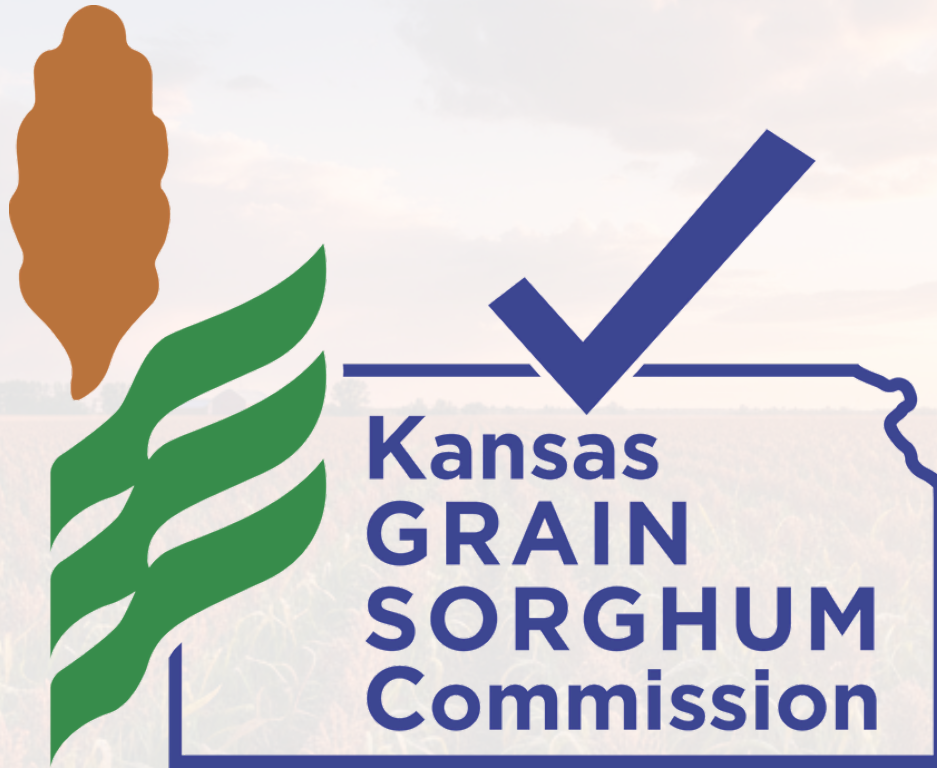
Mindy Wells serves as the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission's Collegiate Communications Fellow. A sophomore at Kansas State University, she studies agricultural communications and natural resources. She stays involved with the Collegian Media Group, Royal Purple Yearbook, Collegiate Cattlewomen and Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, building skills in writing, media production and leadership. Hailing from Barber County, Wells champions a strong appreciation for production agriculture and rural communities.



## CARSON RUDD, COLLEGIATE FOOD AND AG FELLOW



Carson Rudd serves as the 2026 Flinchbaugh Collegiate Food and Ag Fellow for Kansas Sorghum. A sophomore at Kansas State University, he studies agricultural economics and global food systems leadership while staying active in Student Government Association, Students for Cultivating Change, Agricultural Education Club and as a Staley School of Leadership Ambassador. Raised near Flora, Indiana, he discovered his passion for agriculture through FFA and high school ag classes and chose Kansas in order to best foster his future profession.



Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission  
P.O. Box 2  
Manhattan, KS 66505  
[www.ksgrainsorghum.org](http://www.ksgrainsorghum.org)