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Nebraska Sorghum leaders honored at annual banquet

LINCOLN, Neb. (March 17, 2026) – Nebraska Sorghum Producers and the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board recognized industry leaders and students during the 2026 Nebraska Sorghum Banquet on March 12. The awards honored contributions that strengthen the state’s sorghum industry.

Tallgrass was named the inaugural Nebraska Sorghum Producers Industry Partner of the Year. The company was recognized for its commitment to collaboration, transparency and engagement with landowners, agricultural associations and rural communities. Through consistent outreach and open dialogue, Tallgrass has worked to build trust and ensure agriculture has a voice in conversations that affect land use and rural livelihoods.

David Junker of McCook, Neb., received the Service to Sorghum Award from the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board in recognition of his six years of leadership on the board, including service as chairman. During his tenure, Junker helped guide the organization through key transitions while supporting continued growth and stability for Nebraska sorghum producers.

“I’m honored to receive the Service to Sorghum Award,” Junker said. “It’s a privilege to be counted among past winners and to work with people who care so deeply about supporting Nebraska sorghum and the farmers who grow it.”

Nebraska Sorghum Producers recognized two scholarship recipients during the banquet, honoring students who are helping to shape the next generation of Nebraska agriculture. These awards support students in their agricultural education endeavors.

Nathan Rippe of Indianola, Neb., is pursuing a degree in agricultural systems technology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and operates NFR Metalworks, where he manufactures livestock equipment and welding kits for high school agricultural programs.

Hunter Blume of Indianola, Neb., is a graduate of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and is continuing his studies at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He has been active in FFA and 4-H, competing in agronomy contests and developing a strong interest in helping farmers adopt sustainable crop production practices.

“These awards recognize the people and partners who help strengthen Nebraska’s sorghum industry,” said Kristine Dvoracek Jameson, executive director of Nebraska Sorghum Producers. “Their leadership, service and dedication continue to move our industry forward.”

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The Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board administers the checkoff on sorghum sold in the state. The Board’s funds are invested in programs of international and domestic market development, research, policy development, and producer and consumer education. To learn more, visit www.nebraskasorghum.org.

Media Assets:

- **File name “Nathan Rippe-2”:** Nathan Rippe, left, receives a Nebraska Sorghum Producers Scholarship from Chair Tracy Zink at the 2026 Nebraska Sorghum Appreciation Banquet in Grand Island, Thursday, March 12, 2026. (Nebraska Sorghum Photo/Jesse Harding Campbell)
- **File name “Tallgrass-2”:** Johnathan Hladik, left, of Tallgrass accepts the Industry Partner of the Year award from Nebraska Sorghum Producers Chair Tracy Zink at the 2026 Nebraska Sorghum Appreciation Banquet in Grand Island, Thursday, March 12, 2026. (Nebraska Sorghum Photo/Jesse Harding Campbell)