Nebraska Sorghum

Annual Report:
2022

www.nebraskasorghum.org

Upcoming Events:

2023 Nebraska Sorghum Symposium and NeSPA Annual Meeting

- Thursday, January 26
- NCTA, Curtis NE
- 9am - 4pm

2nd Annual Nebraska Global Sorghum Processing and Investment Summit

- Thursday, March 23
- Archway Monument, Kearney NE
- 9am - 5pm

Nebraska Sorghum Appreciation Banquet

- Friday, March 24
- Archway Monument, Kearney, NE
- 6pm - 9pm

NGSB/NeSPA Quarterly Meetings

- Friday, March 24
- 9am - 4pm
- Kearney Public Library

Producer and Consumer Resources

Drought Monitor

UNL Crop Budget Report

KSU Grain Basis Map

Sorghum Army Outpost

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2022 By the Numbers:
Taking Stock of Promotion, Education, Industry Development, and Statewide Outreach

At Nebraska Sorghum, we have prioritized a very specific set of strategies, goals, and outcomes. This approach, at its heart, is centered upon the belief that the most beneficial service we can provide to our growers is achieved through value-added processing for finished and semi-finished sorghum-based products. Locating processing proximately to the production of grain can help mitigate commodity markets risk, provide increased opportunities for direct contracting, create jobs in rural communities, and decrease supply lines for end-users.

Outreach and education are fundamental components to the achieving this larger strategy. As such, we regularly participate in, and facilitate, diverse educational, and promotional activities across the state. These activities, while always robust, continued to escalate throughout 2022.

Highlights our activities in 2002 include:

1) Special Events
- **The 2022 Nebraska Sorghum Symposium (Kearney)**
- **The First Annual Nebraska Global Sorghum Processing and Investment Summit (Lincoln)**
- **The 2022 Annual Sorghum Producers Appreciation Banquet**

2) Community Events
- **Milo Days (Carleton)**
- **Fourth of July Parade (Seward)**
- **Yorkfest (York)**

3) University of Nebraska-Affiliated Events
- **The Testing Ag Performance Solutions (TAPS) Program (North Platte)**
- **Haskell Lab Field Day (Concord)**
- **Nebraska Ag Youth Institute (NAYI) (Lincoln)**

University of Nebraska Extension director, Dr. Charles Stoltenow speaks at the 2022 Sorghum Appreciation Banquet in Grand Island.





Mural in downtown Carleton, Nebraska's Milo Capital.

2022 By the Numbers:
Taking Stock of Promotion, Education, Industry Development, and Statewide Outreach

4) Trade Shows and Fairs

- **The Nebraska Ag Expo (Lincoln)**
- **Commodity Classic (New Orleans)**
- **Agceptional Women's Conference (Norfolk)**
- **Douglas County Fair (Omaha)**
- **Lancaster County Fair (Lincoln)**
- **York County Fair (York)**
- **Nebraska State Fair (Grand Island)**
- **Husker Harvest Days (Grand Island)**

5) FFA School Visits:

- **Norfolk**
- **McCool Junction**
- **McCook**
- **Omaha Bryan Urban Ag Academy**



Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board and Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association members, Klint Stewart and Todd Downer, making our famous sorghum chocolate chip cookies at the Nebraska State Fair.

In addition, Nebraska Sorghum grew our digital media presence considerably over the year. We are now active on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Soundcloud, and YouTube. By better leveraging social media platforms, our organization has been able to reach more people than ever. Boasting post viewership consistently in the five to six thousand range, we have illustrated industry-leading principals which advance our ability to tell the sorghum story.

Our traditional media presence grew as well in 2022. Regular appearances on "Pure Nebraska", which airs statewide each month, special segments on NTV throughout the year, increased presence on the radio through Broadcast House in Lincoln, WJAG in Norfolk, KRVN statewide, and High Plains Radio in McCook have furthered the impact of our messaging amongst producers and industry partners. We have also been featured in print in newspapers across the state and magazines like Farm Journal and the High Plains Journal.



Nebraska Sorghum Executive Director, Nate Blum, speaks with students at the Bryan Urban Ag Academy in Omaha.

2022 By the Numbers:
Taking Stock of Promotion, Education, Industry Development, and Statewide Outreach



A view of Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board, Stuart Hoff's, plot at the Rogers Memorial Farm in Lincoln.

Nebraska Sorghum also unveiled a new website in August of 2022. Though the URL did not change, the new site is professionally developed and managed by industry-partner, Lee Agri-media. The polished digital presence lends even greater credibility to our organization.

nebraskasorghum.org

The real value of our proactive outreach and education schedule can be found by examining outcomes for sorghum across the state over the course of the past few years. Most notably, planted sorghum acres in Nebraska have increased by a staggering 99% percent since 2020. This is due in part to climate and markets factors, but our presence amongst growers and communities across the state should not be overlooked as a contributing factor.

Additionally, more and more sorghum-based businesses are looking to Nebraska. For example, Chasin' Dreams Farms is now co-packing their popped sorghum snack food in York County. Other companies are proceeding through the processes of building new milling and processing operations at various locations around the state in the coming year.

In the end, it is our outreach and education which are the "bread and butter" strategies of our mission to provide greater value for sorghum for the U.S. domestic market. Without this cornerstone, our goals would be unattainable. If you are planning an event, need a speaker, or seeking a guest teacher in your classroom, please send us an email at: sorghum.board@nebraska.gov.

Taking the Lead:
Programs and Initiatives in 2022

Each year, Nebraska Sorghum facilitates multiple initiatives above and beyond our statutory mission. These programs, which come at little to no cost to Nebraska taxpayers, are designed to create opportunities for increased awareness of sorghum in new contexts for consumers and provide additional value to producers. In 2022, we continued several of our existing efforts, while also expanding our programmatic reach.

Expanding Producer Resources

The Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association sponsors test plots, at Mike Baker's farm, near Trenton, Nebraska, every September. Unfortunately, drought impacted Baker's farm in much the same way as it did many producers across the state. This caused the cancellation of the in-person field day in 2022. However, we felt there was value illustrating the effects of extreme drought on sorghum. Thus, we did record drone footage and agronomy information at Baker's farm and at other farms across the state. This information is available on our social media and our website. Additionally, we continue to archive previous years' test plot data as well our sessions from the annual sorghum symposium under the "in the field" tab.

Collaborative Efforts:

The power of mutually beneficial collaboration cannot be overstated. By working with adjacent institutions in the public and private sector, Nebraska Sorghum is able to achieve more than we ever could on our own. We believe that a rising tide lifts all boats. Examples of this include developing soil health and water conservation curriculum with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Consevation service {USDA-NRCS}. This programming will not only help tell the sorghum story. Together, this curriculum will be a valuable resource for growers as they make sustainable decisions for their cropping systems.

Partnerships with institutions of higher education, such as the University of Nebraska and Concordia University, in Seward, Nebraska, play a key role. Our Catalyst initiative continues to grow interest amongst students and entrepreneurs for diverse sorghum-based products. In 2022, Concordia University greatly expanded their Catalyst efforts to include over a dozen teams.

Fostering relationships in the private sector is also important. Doing so provides the opportunity to tell the Nebraska story to existing businesses. The priorities of these decision-makers often include expanding their operations into North American markets. These connections also allow us to facilitate relationships between brokers and buyers, who contact us independently and regularly, for the purchase of commodity grain sorghum in international markets.

Taking the Lead:
Programs and Initiatives in 2022



The Indo-Pacific Framework Phase One Negotiations in Brisbane, Australia



Blum presents to US and Australian negotiators



Congressman Adrian Smith meets with delegates from Nebraska representing sorghum and the US Global Leadership Coalition in June

Legislative Advocacy

Many of the most pressing issues facing agriculture necessarily include solutions best addressed within the confines of federal policy. The Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association has worked proactively to address these issues and raise awareness for decision-makers in Nebraska and in Washington, D.C. In 2022, Nebraska Sorghum made three separate legislative visits to Capitol Hill to discuss issues such as: The new Farm Bill, Climate-smart agriculture, trade, and proposed restrictions on atrazine by the EPA.

Nebraska Sorghum Executive Director, Nate Blum, also serves on the Grains, Feeds, Oilseeds, and Planting Seeds Ag Trade Advisory Committee {ATAC} at the USDA. In this role, Blum provides advice upon request to officials at the USDA and the office of the US Trade Representative {USTR}. Nebraska Sorghum was present in Washington, D.C., at several virtual meetings throughout the year, and at the first round of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework {IPEF} negotiations in Brisbane, Australia. At the negotiations, Blum presented to Australian and American negotiators on the importance of including investment and incentives for sorghum markets developments, processing, and production within the IPEF framework.

Blum also traveled to Washington in support of his role on the Nebraska Leadership Committee of the United States Global Leadership Coalition {USGLC}. The USGLC is a group which advocates for the 1% of the federal budget which supports the United States' diplomatic missions around the world. This includes the United States Agency for International Development {USAID}. USAID is responsible for, amongst other things, the distribution of food aid around the world, which includes sorghum. The dissemination of food diplomacy is a valuable tool in opening new markets for American farmers.

Taking the Lead:
Programs and Initiatives in 2022

Sorghum Cares

Since 2019, Nebraska Sorghum has leveraged the Sorghum Cares Initiative to make impacts in communities and at the human level. Past programming has included collecting veterans' oral histories for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. Nebraska Sorghum also worked with Congressman Bacon to facilitate the first OFFICIAL public dedication of a United States Space Force flag in the country, (at the parade of flags in Seward).



In 2022, sorghum Cares shifted focus to support a series of informational meetings for "The World to Rebuild Rural Ukraine." {WRRU} Executive Director, Roman Grynyshyn visited Nebraska as he traveled the country to raise awareness for the needs of small family farmers, as Russian military forces withdrew from the northwest and central regions of Ukraine. These small family farms are responsible, historically, as much as 30% of Ukrainian exports of wheat, upon which many developing countries are dependent. You can find more information and make a contribution to rebuilding these farms at www.wrru.org.

World to Rebuild Rural Ukraine

In June and July, Nebraska Sorghum participated in the Young Leaders in the Americas Initiative {YLAI} for the first time. YLAI is a program through the US State Department which brings young people from the Caribbean and Latin America to work with, and learn from, public and private sector institutions in developing their leadership skills and businesses. We served as a host organization for Ms. Bevon Charles.



Ms. Charles owns and operates a large operation in Grenada called Akata Farms. She spent a month in Nebraska where she visited several farms, attended producer meetings and learned more about how agricultural organizations function in the United States. Ms. Charles hopes to apply many of the principles learned here in Nebraska in her efforts to further organize Caribbean agriculture.

Akata Farms

Taking the Lead:
Programs and Initiatives in 2022

Nebraska Sorghum also hosted two other entrepreneurs throughout the year. These included Mr. Mohamed Zellama of France and Mr. Franco Borgogno of Argentina. Both of these individuals work in the food space, making gluten-free products for human consumption from sorghum. They visited with partners at Innovation Campus, as well as local and state economic development officials to learn more about what it would mean to expand their businesses in Nebraska.

From providing resources to Nebraska farmers, to promoting education for consumers, to building bridges between public and private sector institutions and individuals, Nebraska Sorghum is proud of our "extracurricular" activities. We will continue to approach our mission creatively in order to differentiate the Nebraska brand and provide value-added opportunities for our farmers.





Above: Mr. Mohamed Zellama (Ori Foods - France) receives an honorary 'citizenship' from Nebraska Secretary of State, Robert Evnen

Left: Mr. Franco Borgogno (Curcuma - Argentina) poses with Chef Nader, owner of Billy's Restaurant in Lincoln.

Sorghum Around the World: Trade Missions, Coalitions, and Representation on the Global Stage

It is difficult to deny that the advent of widespread access to digital communications and advances in travel have made the world seem much smaller in recent decades. Closing the geographic gap through technology has revolutionized how people perceive problems, and opportunities. Recognition of our interconnected world in the 21st century has facilitated relationships which mutually benefit organizations which may otherwise find themselves as historical competitors.

The sorghum industry is an excellent example of this. Recognition of the challenges that sorghum commonly faces around the world has given rise to partnerships with organizations and individuals who share the same hopes for the industry as we do here in Nebraska. The most notable example of this collaboration is 'Sorghum United'.

Sorghum United began in February of 2022 as a direct result of Nebraska Sorghum's attendance of the European Sorghum Congress held by Sorghum ID in Toulouse, France the previous October. At the conference, NGSB Executive Director Nate Blum and Sorghum ID Executive Director, Martin Gomez, agreed that the common problems around education and awareness of sorghum may have common solutions. Thus, when Sorghum United began meeting virtually the following year, efforts began to identify collaborative areas in which traditional trade competitors could come together in partners in growing the industry as a whole.

The effort quickly turned to education and awareness. For example, sorghum is called by different names depending on where the discussion is taking place. In India, one might refer to "jowar'. In Northern Africa, it is known as 'mashilla' just as in Europe and the Middle East it is known as 'sorgho'. In North America, the common nomenclature is 'milo'. The question became, "How can Sorghum United" create localizable, but uniform messaging and marketing that would help consumers recognize these names as representative of the same grain?

SORGHUM
UNITED

Sorghum Around the World: Trade Missions, Coalitions, and Representation on the Global Stage

Over the next several months, Sorghum United came to include more than fifty members on every continent with the exception of Antartica. Members come from the private sector, research, and governmental officials. The group ultimately built a website and commissioned a series of ten posters featuring 'The Sorgho Squad'; cartoon characters meant to be appealing to children and adults alike. The characters, named Jowar, Mashilla, and Milo represent themes around industrial applications for sorghum, human and animal health and nutrition, and environmental benefits of the grain respectively.

Incidentally, it turns out that in March of 2022, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted to make 2023 the 'International Year of Millets' (IYM). This eventually included sorghum by a vote at the UN Food and Ag Organization (UNFAO) in August. Sorghum was included as a 'major millet', in contrast to the 'minor millets' like proso, fonio, and foxtail, which are smaller in size. Sorghum United quickly recognized the opportunity to partner with the UNFAO in support of the IYM.

One of our members, Mr. Nicholas Musisi of Kampala, Uganda, extensively studied the lessons learned during the International Year of Quinoa (IYQ) in 2013. His work showed that South American producers, and their partners were able to leverage the IYQ to grow their industry from obscurity to one with widespread name-recognition and large market-share through regional events, conferences, and marketing. Their efforts drove industry change, but their success was due in large part to the legitimacy lent to their work by virtue of the United Nations' support.

We believe that the IYM can have the same impact for sorghum in North America and beyond. So much so that Nebraska Sorghum attended the opening ceremony of the IYM at the UNFAO in Rome on December 6. We were the only North American agricultural organization present for the event in-person. Nebraska Sorghum is also working with the North American Millets Alliance (NAMA) to create a Regional Steering Committee for the IYM. The Committee will be a continent-wide effort to support conferences, education, and dissemination of promotional materials.



Blum shows off a Sorgho Squad poster at the IYM Opening Ceremony



Sorghum United Members in Rome for the IYM Opening Ceremony.
Left to Right: Martin Gomez (Sorghum ID), Nate Blum (Nebraska Sorghum), Shauravi Malik (Slurrp), Monia Caramma (Bontasana)

Sorghum Around the World: Trade Missions, Coalitions, and Representation on the Global Stage



The Sorgho Squad posters are available for free download on the Sorghum United website. They are being translated into the six United Nations languages, as well as other regional dialects, by our members. Those posters can be viewed here, and are included at the end of this newsletter:

Sorghum United

You can also learn more about the IYM at the UNFAO website here:

FAO IYM

In addition to our efforts surrounding Sorghum United and the IYM, Nebraska Sorghum also participated in two trade missions in 2022. In February, we accompanied Nebraska Secretary of State Robert Evnen in a high-level delegation to the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. These meetings were timely considering the looming invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces, and the resulting food insecurity in the region, which is highly dependent upon Ukrainian wheat. Water management and nutrition were also of peak concerns in the region. Read more about our efforts in the MENA Region in the "Special Nebraska Sorghum Report" that was published upon our return here:

Report from the UAE and Jordan

In August, we again travelled across the Atlantic. This time for meetings in the United Kingdom as part of an official delegation with then-governor, Pete Ricketts. Ancillary sorghum-specific meetings were held across the country with researchers, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, and government officials ahead of the arrival of the large contingent of Nebraskans in London. Read more about our efforts in the United Kingdom in the "Special Nebraska Sorghum Report" here:

Report from the United Kingdom

A Big Year Ahead: A Sneak Peek at What's to Come in 2023

Sorghum is gaining momentum. Evidence for this can be seen in the increase in acres of planted and harvested sorghum in Nebraska (99% since 2020), increased funding for research (a $65 million grant was awarded to the National Sorghum Producers for the study of sorghum's climate-smart impacts), and increased production of sorghum-based products for food, fuel, and fiber in the private sector (including pet food, cereals, snack food, and baby food, as well as bio-based building materials and even carbon fiber). The signs are clear, sorghum is experiencing a renaissance.

At Nebraska Sorghum, we are pushing to expedite those trends. In addition to our work with the UNFAO in support of the IYM, we are also planning events here in Nebraska.

1) The 2023 Nebraska Sorghum Symposium:

- **The Nebraska Sorghum Symposium is an annual day-long educational experience specifically designed to provide resources and information to our farmers as they gear up for the next planting season. This year's event features presentations on agronomy, soil health, water management, herbicide-resistant sorghum varieties, climate, marketing, and research.**
- **Sessions will be recorded at the event, and available on our website for on-demand viewing in the week following the Symposium.**
- **The Symposium will be held on January 26th in Curtis, Nebraska at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.**
- **Free registration is available here:**

2023 Nebraska Sorghum Symposium

2023 Sorghum Symposium Agenda



Location and Date: NCTA – Curtis – January 26

Agenda:

9:00 – 9:10	Nebraska Sorghum Annual Report – Executive Director, Nate Blum
9:00 – 9:45	2023 Sorghum Agronomy Update - Dr. Brent Bean, USCP
9:45 – 10:30	Water Management with Sorghum - Lucas Haag, K-State
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:45	Sorghum and Soil Health - Aaron Hird, NRCS
11:45 – 12:15	2023 Climate Outlook - Dr. Michael McMahon, HDR **12:15 – 1:00** Lunch
1:00 – 1:30	Vendor Presentations
1:30 – 2:00	Post-Herbicide Resistant Sorghum Panel - S&W, Advanta, Pioneer
2:00 – 2:30	Quantifying the Sustainability of Sorghum – Adam York, USCP
3:00 – 3:30	Engaging Specialty Customers - Zach Simon, USCP
3:30 – 4:00	TAPS Presentation and Panel - Chuck Burr, University of Nebraska Extension
4:00	Adjourn
3:45 – 4:30	Annual Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association Member Meeting
4:30	Adjourn

A Big Year Ahead: A Sneak Peek at What's to Come in 2023

2) The Second Annual Nebraska Global Sorghum Processing and Investment Summit

- **The Nebraska Global Sorghum Processing and Investment Summit gathers entrepreneurs from around the country and around the world. The goal is to connect these sorghum-based businesses with local investors and economic developers in the hope that they will expand their businesses with Nebraska-based processing.**
- **The inaugural event in 2022 included eight businesses. Two of those businesses have initiated processing and co-packing in Nebraska.**
- **The Summit will be held in Kearney at the Archway Monument on March 23rd.**
- **Free Registration is available here:**

2023 Nebraska Summit



Thanks to our work in the human, animal, and environmental health spaces, Nebraska Sorghum is frequently asked to present at conferences. As of this writing, we have been asked to provide content for two such gatherings in 2023. If you are looking for a speaker for your event, please send an email to: sorghum.board@nebraska.gov

1) Millets: Superfood of the Century Challenges and Opportunities

- **A global conference focusing on growing markets for sorghum and millets**
- **(Virtual) February 4th**
- **Registration at:**

Rishi Conferences

2) Sorghum in the 21st Century: Global Sorghum Congress

- **Hosted by Sorghum ID, this conference will bring together sorghum professionals from around the world to discuss research and markets development.**
- **Montpellier, France - June 5-9**
- **Registration at:**

Global Sorghum Congress

And, of course, Nebraska Sorghum will continue to be present around the state throughout 2023. We are committed to continuing our regular monthly outreach to communities. This outreach includes meetings with producers, industry partners, high schools, colleges, community leadership and local media. We are also working on a partnership with the natural Resources Conservation Service and Pheasants Forever to provide CEU opportunities for producers around soil health and water conservation.

Look for Nebraska Sorghum to return to the Nebraska State Fair, Husker Harvest Days, and various county fairs, University of Nebraska-Sponsored Field Days, and more. Keep up with us on social media to see how we are working for you. If you have an event that you would like us to attend, please send a message to: sorghum.board@nebraska.gov

Message from the Director of Relationship Development: Nebraska. It *Is* For Everyone.



This year, Nebraska Sorghum added me to the team in Lincoln. Beginning in August, my time here has already allowed me to contribute to the organization in a way that benefits producers, consumers, and the great state of Nebraska. As the first Director of Relationship Development, I get to combine what I love best about our state, its people, with a passion for agriculture, to further our organization by setting new goals for this role.

Developing a new position in an existing organization does not come without challenges. While there is always a plethora of things to be done in and out of our office, we have been given an amazing opportunity to set new goals, expand existing ones, and better define our mission. The challenge is navigating through new ideas and existing strategies to optimize possibilities while perfecting our integral values and operations. Executive Director, Nate Blum, and I have both been working hard to create new ways to serve our growers, educate our consumers, and now, bridge the gap between the two groups by creating lasting relationships and mutual understanding. We will utilize this position to engage more communities in outreach initiatives, correspond more effectively with people we meet at events domestically and internationally, and create educational opportunities for producers and consumers to interact and learn from our organization and one another.

Often, it seems that Nebraska is overlooked by people outside of the state. We lack the majesty of the Rocky Mountains, or the tranquility of waves crashing onto a beach. Nebraska is special for many other reasons, though, and primarily because of its people. Nebraska, not only home to “Nebraska Nice,” offers an extensive and welcoming network of individuals, ready to be of service to anyone at any time. As the Director of Relationship Development, I am thrilled to be tasked with not only promoting this network, but helping others form new connections, by further weaving together this web of interconnectedness, teamwork, and motivation. Whether it is inviting new businesses to the state, hosting international dignitaries, or simply facilitating relationship growth to achieve the common goals of Nebraska agriculture, Nebraska Sorghum is always working hard to ensure that you have the resources you need, when you need them. People are people everywhere, but in Nebraska, people are our greatest resource - and the sum of what we can achieve together is unfathomable.



Message from the Director
Why We Do What We Do:
Orchestrating Myriad Activities Toward One Goal



As you may have noticed from this report, the activities of the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board and the Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association encompass a broad holistic approach to producer and consumer education, markets development, and community engagement. While some of these activities may seem disconnected when looked at individually, together they form the tapestry of an intricate strategy. No single initiative is undertaken without consideration of its role in advancing the industry as a whole.

Take community parades for example. This is a space usually leveraged by local businesses, services, and political officeholders and hopefuls. Why then does Nebraska Sorghum make the effort to participate in an event that is outside of the traditional realm of commodity-related activities? In short, doing so increases visibility for our organization. In so doing, we are supporting the local community, validating local celebrations, and leveraging a positive event as a way of reminding growers and agri-business that we exist as an option in their operations. Outside of a brief time commitment, the lift is light in consideration of the weight of the impact. Most importantly for me personally as a native Nebraskan, this is a way to help celebrate our unique communities.

The reality is that if you aren't at the table, you're on the menu....or worse...irrelevant. There are plenty of 'traditional' avenues for commodity groups like ours to be involved in, and those are all great, time-tested and expected events. But, in order to be NOTICED at the table, we do well to think outside-the-box when considering our approaches. In this sense, our initiatives can be viewed as similar to diversification in the private sector. Different approaches help us to stand out differently.

And stand out we do. The overarching strategy for Nebraska Sorghum is leverage opportunities for value-added processing of sorghum for the domestic market. This is important for us geographically, and for our producers fiscally. Filling boats in bulk for foreign partners is important to trade. Yet, as the only quintoupally landlocked state, our growers are disadvantaged by transportation and logistics costs between our grain elevators and ports in Texas and Louisiana.

In that disadvantage an edge can be found. By attracting value-added processors for sorghum-based products to Nebraska, farmers can potentially increase on-farm revenues through direct marketing of sorghum as a specialty (rather than, or in addition to) a commodity crop. Processors can decrease supply lines as they would be located proximate to the production of their raw ingredient and centrally All while creating jobs and increasing tax bases across the state.

Message from the Director
Why We Do What We Do:
Orchestrating Myriad Activities Toward One Goal

The logical next question when considering the programming at Nebraska Sorghum ought to be that of effectiveness. Have these unique approaches helped to grow our organization and industry in a quantifiable way?

The short answer is, "Yes". Sorghum acres planted and harvested in Nebraska have increased by 99% since 2020. This is due to myriad factors, including grain markets, climate, and more, but is also due to the fact that we are reaching more producers. Some of whom are re-introducing sorghum in their cropping systems after more than three decades of monoculture agriculture. Companies like Chasin' Dreams Farm are now producing their product via co-packing in Nebraska. There are at least three other projects underway to build processing for food products in Nebraska. Still more industrial use projects are taking shape, including the use of sorghum in producing carbon fiber with PromeMaterials in Lincoln and a desire to expand operations to Nebraska by Milex for their biodegradable blow-in insulation product.



York County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director, Lisa Hurley and Nebraska Sorghum Director of Relationship Development, Genevieve Tonniges at the University of Cambridge

Attracting businesses to our state amounts to dipping our toes in the world of economic development. Issues such as workforce housing, labor availability, and even childcare must be addressed in every instance. Fortunately, our outreach and community engagement naturally facilitate relationships with economic development professionals. Leaving us to merely "connect the dots" in many cases.



Aurora Development Corporation Executive Director, Kelsey Bergen, gives Blum a tour of economic development sites in Aurora

Internationally, these initiatives have positioned Nebraska to be a leader in the promotion of the industry. This is exceptionally timely as the world looks to redefine supply chain, healthy food, and climate-smart agricultural paradigms. Since 2019, we've taken Nebraska from being absent at the table, to sitting near the head of the table alongside our partners. Much work remains. Industry-wide change requires patience, creativity, proactive collaborations and time. It is tempting to lose motivation along the way, but rushing the work threatens having to start all over. We must remain steadfast in our conviction that this strategy, and all the pieces that fit together like an elegant clockwork, will provide the best value for our growers, communities, and industries in the long-term.

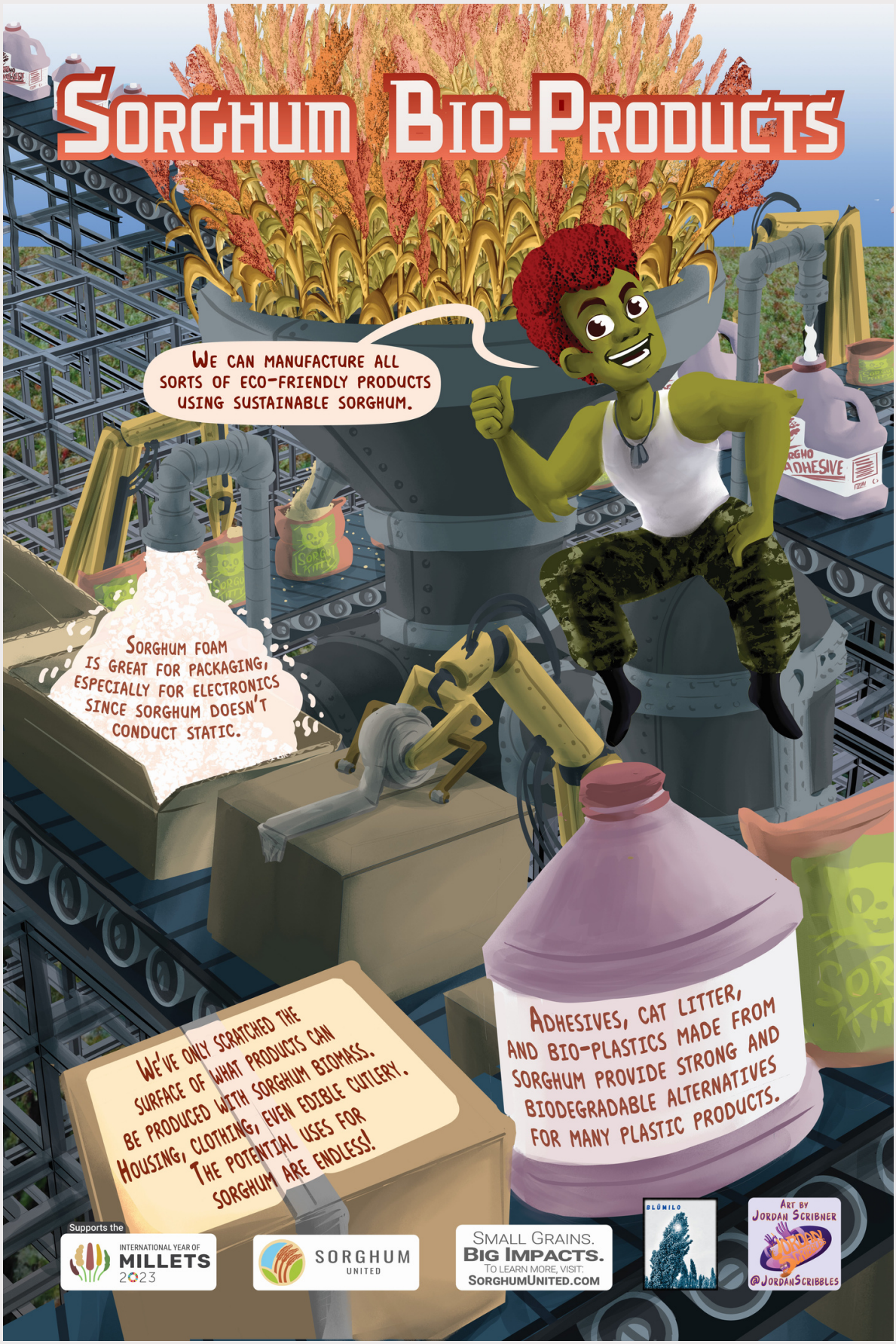
To paraphrase an ancient Chinese proverb: "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. But, today aint bad either!"



The Sorgho Squad:
Telling the Story of Sorghum in Support of the International year of Millets



The Sorgho Squad:
Telling the Story of Sorghum in Support of the International year of Millets



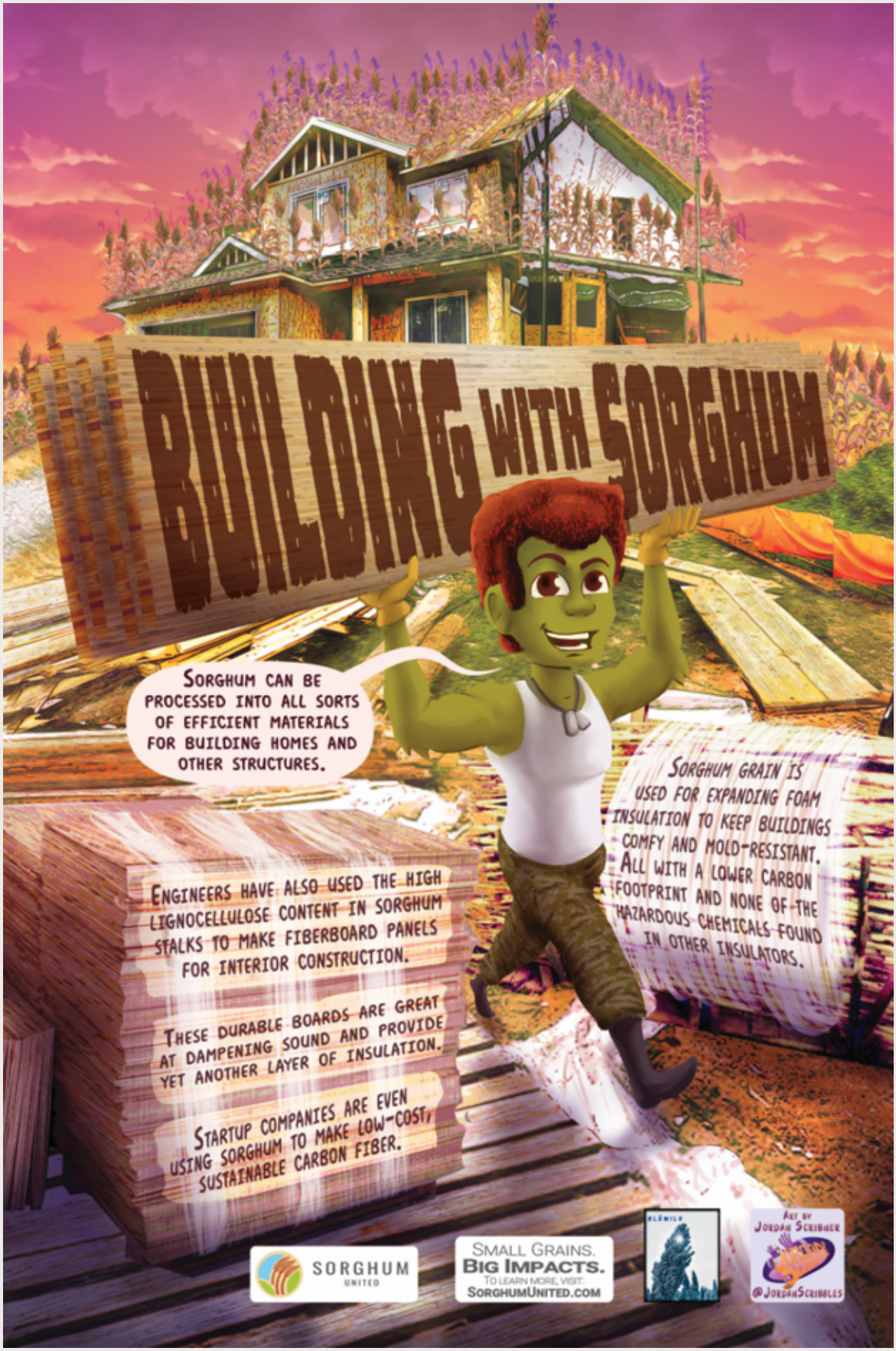
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Telling the Story of Sorghum in Support of the International year of Millets



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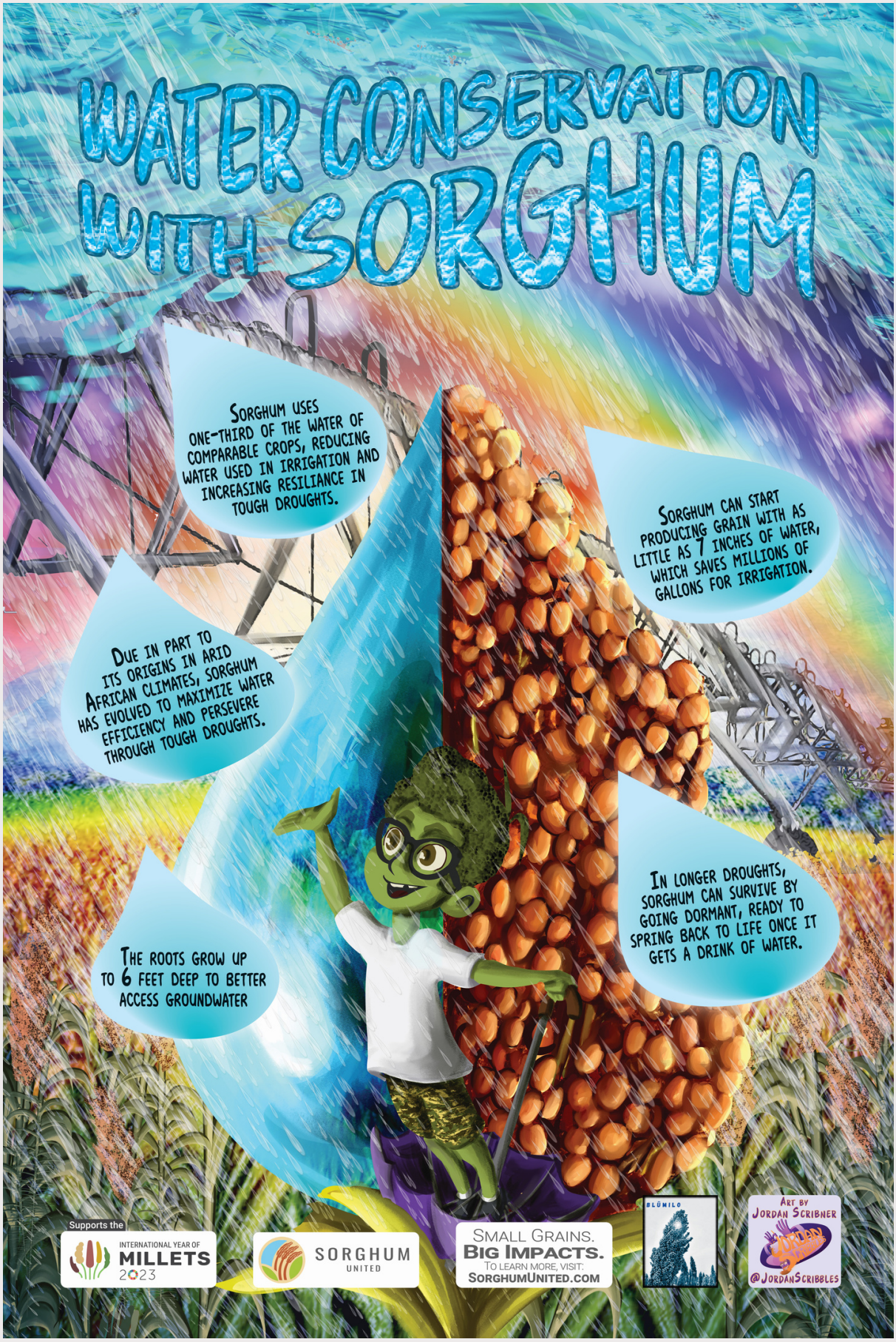
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