

Texas Sorghum: The Versatile Ancient Grain



Texas ranks second in the U.S. for sorghum production with 728,000 hectares (1.8 million acres). Sorghum is used around the world as an efficient forage for livestock. It is also an increasingly popular choice in the consumer food industry and other emerging markets (including energy). Known as an environment-friendly crop, sorghum is favored by farmers for its ability to convert sunlight into chemical energy and its efficient use of water—both of which matter for crops growing in Texas.

Over 50% of all sorghum grown in the U.S. is produced for export markets, and Texas, with its network of seaports, airports, roads and railways, helps get sorghum to locations around the world with ease.

The Versatility of Sorghum

Texas sorghum is a truly versatile crop with a variety of unique uses:

- **Forage sorghum** is best used for grazing pasture, hay production, silage and green chop. Forage sorghum typically grows 2.4 to 4.5 meters (8 to 15 feet) tall and is most popular for use as silage for feeding livestock.
- **Grain sorghum** can take many shapes and sizes from a tight-headed, round panicle to an open, droopy panicle that can be short or tall. The color varies but this type of sorghum is mainly used for livestock feed and in consumer food applications.
- **Biomass sorghum** has the largest stature of all the sorghum varieties, reaching a height of 6 meters (20 feet) in a normal growing season. These hybrids are used primarily for the production of bioenergy.
- **Sweet sorghum** is predominantly grown for sorghum syrup, a healthy alternative sweetener to produce whiskey- and rum-type products. Unlike grain sorghum, sweet sorghum is harvested for the stalks rather than the grain and is crushed like sugar cane or beets to produce a syrup.



Texas Sorghum: The Versatile Ancient Grain



Powerhouse Ancient Grain

This plant-based grain has stood the test of time. As consumer demand for versatile, healthy and sustainable grains rises, sorghum's popularity is seeing a resurgence. Sorghum is non-GMO and gluten free, making it a perfect grain for those with gluten sensitivities or intolerances.

Sorghum contains 10% protein, nearly 75% complex carbohydrates and is rich in vitamin B6, which helps you feel fuller longer and powers you through your day. It provides an excellent source of dietary fiber, which greatly improves digestive health, and is high in potassium and low in sodium which promotes healthy blood pressure.



The Texas Sorghum Belt in South Texas is home to many multigenerational farms.



CITRUS SALAD WITH POPPED SORGHUM
Popped sorghum adds a fun texture along with a slightly sweet and nutty flavor to salads.



Sorghum grain



Sorghum syrup



Sorghum flour

Get Cooking with Sorghum

Sorghum comes in a wide variety of forms, ranging from whole grain to flour to syrup. You can use sorghum grains in cooked dishes, as a salad garnish or in granola snacks. Sorghum flour can be used for baked goods like pies or cookies while sorghum syrup can be poured over breakfast waffles. Love popcorn? Try popping sorghum in the microwave or on the stove for a health snack.

Sorghum grains can be prepared like rice, quinoa or other whole grains. You can cook sorghum using your stovetop, slow cooker, oven or rice cooker. Whole grain sorghum adds a hearty, nutty flavor to your favorite recipes.

More Information

Contact the Texas Department of Agriculture for more information about Texas agricultural products at GoGlobal@TexasAgriculture.gov.