Appendix B

Arkansas Corn & Grain Sorghum Promotion Board

Minutes

July 8, 2026
9:00 a.m.

The Arkansas Corn & Grain Sorghum Promotion Board met on July 8, 2026, at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station 3121 Highway 1 South, Marianna, Arkansas – Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

Board members present: Trent Dabbs (Chairman), Tommy Young, Patrick Matt Smith, Matt Gammill, William Perry Galloway, Jason Felton

Board members present via Zoom: N/A

Board members absent: Kenny Fallwell

Department/UADA Guests: Inoussa Zaki, Arkansas Department of Agriculture Chief Fiscal Officer; University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) researchers and extension personnel; Carson Horn, APR (The Communications Group)

1. <u>Call to Order</u>

- The meeting was called to order by Chair at 9:00a.m. The Chair Trent Dabbs welcomed attendees and initiated roll call for both in-person and virtual participants. The meeting opened with a University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture field tour of research plots at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station (approximately 9:00 a.m.–10:50 a.m.), followed by the business session.

COMPLETED RESEARCH & PROMOTION REPORTS

- UADA researchers presented final and progress reports on Board-funded projects. Key points from each presentation follow.

Dr. Tom Barber — Weed Management / Atrazine Alternatives (Final Report).

- Reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed its Endangered Species Act analysis of atrazine with a favorable outcome; the matter moves to EPA for a final decision on the number of runoff-mitigation points that may be required by county. Barbers expressed greater confidence than a year ago in continued atrazine availability.

- Evaluated potential atrazine replacements and HPPD-inhibiting herbicides (Callisto, Arneson/Impact-type chemistries) for Palmer amaranth (pigweed) control; found roughly 50/50 post-emergence response, with confirmed HPPD-resistant populations in the state. Emphasized starting with a strong residual program for greatest savings, including with see-and-spray (targeted spray) systems tested in a five-state project.
- Reported ALS- and glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass, concentrated in southeast Arkansas with a confirmed location in Mississippi County; fall-applied Command (clomazone) residuals performed best, with acceptable corn tolerance at reduced rates.

Dr. Bloom — Aflatoxin Resistance Genetics (Final Report).

- Characterized this as a solvable problem and the culmination of the program's genetic work on aflatoxin resistance. Identified corn genes responsive to drought and heat stress associated with aflatoxin susceptibility, including heat-shock protein families (e.g., HSP60) more diverse in ancestral/semi-domesticated lines than in modern hybrids.
- Used AI-based protein-folding prediction to accelerate candidate screening; validated roughly 20 high-priority genes through transgenic and non-transgenic (genome-editing) approaches. Noted collaboration with Dr. Joe Lawrence's program on short-stature (single dominant gene) hybrids to avoid pairing the trait with high-aflatoxin lines.
- Work will continue through academic and industry partnerships and potential USDA multistate funding; thanked the Board for prior support of the underlying editing techniques.

Chris Bryant (UADA, Fayetteville; via Zoom) Greenhouse Gas Data Summarization in Corn with and Without Cover Crops (One-Year Project, Completed).

- Measured carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide over 105 consecutive days in a ~160-acre furrow-irrigated corn field (2024, Lower Mississippi River Valley) using an automated solar-powered chamber system, comparing a cereal rye–based cover crop mix to a no-cover-crop control.
- Cover crop treatment showed significantly higher daytime carbon dioxide flux (expected, due to added biomass), no meaningful methane signal, and no significant treatment difference in nitrous oxide or in the integrated global-warming-potential metric.
- Cover crop plots maintained greater soil moisture later in the season and showed a nearly 20 bushel/acre numeric yield advantage (not statistically significant). Most notably, cover crop plots stored carbon and nitrogen over the season while the no-cover control lost carbon, nitrogen, and organic matter.

Board support funded the statistical software/analysis (repeated-measures ANOVA).

Brittany Littlejohn (UADA) Gossypol from Cottonseed Oil for Feral Hog Reproductive Control (Progress / Ongoing; jointly funded with the Soybean Board).

- Prior work using self-pressed U.S. cottonseed oil produced severe reductions in sperm motility (to ~6% progressive motility at the highest doses) but faced palatability problems at the highest concentration, no large-scale U.S. oil source, and low gossypol in U.S. cotton (requiring 500–600 mL/animal/day).
- A newly identified non-U.S. cottonseed oil source tested up to four times higher in gossypol with no palatability issues; a follow-up boar trial reduced progressive motility from ~78% to ~18% over the treatment period, with reduced sperm concentration and no adverse body-weight effects. Residue testing found gossypol essentially non-detectable in muscle (loin) and fecal tissue.
- Next steps (funded in the next cycle): a gilt (female) trial now underway (~12 days into a 21-day cycle), intermittent-feeding studies leveraging gossypol's long blood half-life, a high-fence field trial (Kerrville, Texas), and development of a shelf-stable top-dress attractant product through a commercial partner. Board members supported the top-dress product concept.

Dr. Jason Kelley — Optimizing Plant Population and Nitrogen Rates in Corn (Final Report).

- Tested plant populations from ~22,000 to 42,000 plants/acre against nitrogen rates from 0 to 300 lb across multiple locations and years (irrigated, replicated). Yield generally maximized around 32,000–37,000 plants/acre; little to no yield benefit beyond 200–250 lb nitrogen, with added nitrogen adding cost without return.
- Higher populations combined with higher nitrogen increased lodging (up to ~50% in one trial); zero-nitrogen plots showed no lodging. Yield-component (kernel weight and number) trends matched the yield plateaus, and late-season nitrogen most affected kernel weight.
- Across trials, the most economical combination averaged roughly 200 units of nitrogen at ~32,000 plants/acre; where neither population nor nitrogen was limiting, water and temperature were the constraining factors.

Dr. Trent Roberts — Cover Crop and Rotational Study for Corn (Final Report).

- Demonstrated a chemical strip-tillage approach: terminating cover crop strips early (mid–late February) and the high-biomass middles at planting (mid-April), producing clean planting zones and optimal corn stands while retaining cover-crop biomass.
- A single season following hairy vetch reduced nitrogen needs by ~50–60 lb/acre; with continuous winter-legume use, the yield-maximizing nitrogen rate fell from

~230–235 lb (year 1) to ~50 lb by year 8 (on a 200+ bushel crop). The pre-sidedness nitrate test (PSNT) closely predicted legume nitrogen credits.

- Improved wet-aggregate stability increased infiltration and water-holding capacity; long-term no-till/cover-crop plots at Pine Tree required about three fewer irrigation sets than adjacent full-tillage. Soil organic matter rose only marginally (Mid-South conversion ~10–15%; ~11 tons/acre biomass needed per 0.1% increase). Recommended hairy vetch or Austrian winter pea over winter cereals (which tie up nutrients).

Dr. Chris Henry — Corn Irrigation Research, Sap Flow, and the Arkansas Irrigation Yield Contest.

- Continued work on corn transpiration/sap flow, soil water-retention curves, and refinement of the UADA irrigation scheduling mobile app; found Arkansas corn appears to use somewhat more water at peak and less at the end of season than northern recommendations assume.
- Reported the Irrigation Yield Contest averaged ~226 bu/acre using ~10 inches of irrigation water (near Henry's estimated sustainable aquifer withdrawal), with strong adoption of soil-moisture sensors and computerized hole selection. Participation rose to ~72 entrants this year. Documented that irrigation schools significantly raise adoption (e.g., ~92% vs. 59% for hole selection; ~85% vs. 42% for moisture sensors), and that contest participants influence roughly two-thirds of producers.
- Board discussion followed on the value of a state incentive/tax-credit program for water-saving technology (sensors, surge valves, telemetry, weather stations), coordinated with the state water plan and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. See Board Discussions below.

Crop Enterprise Budgets Update. -Breanna Watkins

- A UADA extension economist reviewed the 2026 crop enterprise budgets, drivers of declining production-agriculture income, and 3-, 5-, and 10-year cost averages. Highlighted diesel and fertilizer/nitrogen price sensitivity, relatively stagnant seed prices, and post-pandemic commodity prices settling back toward pre-pandemic levels. Budgets are available through the UADA crop-budget web page.

CROP PLANTING REPORT AND STATUS (2026)

- Dr. Jason Kelley reported a dry January–April (near a record-dry period) that allowed early, timely planting; the crop generally looked good.
- Arkansas corn planted acreage was reported at approximately 830,000 acres — among the highest in roughly 75 years and well above the ~722,000-acre recent

average. Soybeans were up; total rice was down (long grain down notably); cotton and peanuts down.

- Kelley noted good early conditions but cautioned it was too early to project record yields.

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP REPORT

- Carson Horn, APR, of The Communications Group presented the FY26 Annual Performance Review of the Board's website (corn-sorghum.org) for July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026. ATTACHMENT (FY26 Annual Review — CSB Contractors Report).

- **Active users: 4,823 (+64% vs. prior year); total sessions: 5,085 (+77%).**
- **Direct traffic: 3,416 sessions (+149%) identified as the genuine growth story, reflecting stronger brand recognition and repeat visitors.**
- **Referral traffic: 1,054 sessions (+142%), but Horn flagged that ~95% of referral growth came from two bot/spam sources (trafficheap.cc and trafficheap.com, 499 sessions each; zero the prior year), artificially inflating the figure.**
- **Organic search: 650 sessions (–31%); engagement rate 37.4% (down from 46.78%) and bounce rate 62.6% attributed largely to the inflated bot referral traffic.**
- Website updates (Resources page, Farmer Handbooks, Research Studies, Allocations) drove increased and repeat visits. The Communications Group's service and hosting were renewed effective July 1, 2026; a full-year invoice will issue on July 10, 2026. Horn invited Board members to submit website update requests.

BOARD DISCUSSIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS — MEETING MINUTES

- The Board considered the following previously held meetings' minutes for approval: January 15, 2026; February 2, 2026; February 3, 2026; and February 19, 2026. **Attachments 1-4.**

Motion: To approve the minutes of January 15, February 2, February 3, and February 19, 2026, meeting minutes as distributed.

Moved by Tommy Young, seconded by Matt Smith. Motion carried.

Discussions:

- Water-conservation incentives: Members discussed pursuing a state incentive or tax-credit program for water-saving technology (soil-moisture sensors, surge valves, telemetry, weather stations), potentially tied to the state water plan, and coordinating with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. A member asked that the Board formally investigate incentivizing such water-saving equipment. Discussion ensued.
- Newport (Jackson County) Research Station naming commitment: Discussion recalled the original $250,000 naming gift plus an intended $10,000/year maintenance contribution to the University of Arkansas for the station named in the Board's honor. Because spending authority is limited to a single fiscal year, the prior year's $10,000 was not carried over; staff will determine how to address the lapsed FY appropriation, and the Board discussed documenting its ongoing intent (e.g., via an MOU, as the Soybean Board uses for its fellowship) and acting on an annual request/proposal. allow $20,000 for this FY26 to cover this year and last.

Motion: Motion to allow $20,000 for 2026 to cover this year and last year's Newport Jackson County Research Station naming Commitment.

Moved by Tommy Young, seconded by Matt Gammill. Motion Carried.

Administrative:

- The board wanted to pass a motion to allow Administrators to attend the export exchange, or any other event with the board that the administrators' expenses be paid by the Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board. Any expenses will be paid to the Department of Agriculture staff (administrators) etc.

Motion: motion to allow Administrators to attend the export exchange, or any other event with the board that the administrators' expenses be paid by the Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board.
Motion made Tommy Young and seconded Jason Felton. Motion carried.

Letter of Support (NRCS Proposal):

- Letter of support — FRST (Fertilizer Recommendation Support Tool): The Board was asked to provide a letter of support for an NRCS proposal (North Carolina State University-led, multi-institution) to enhance FRST, a web-based phosphorus/potassium fertilization recommendation tool backed by a nationwide database of ~4,000 trial results, adding return-on-investment and response-probability features. A draft letter was prepared.

Motion: Motion to provide letter of support FRST for the NRCS proposal.

Motioned by Jason Felton and seconded Matt Smith, Motion carried.

- Delegate designations: Members noted that delegate designations to national organizations must be submitted in advance each time and confirmed the delegate for the year. Discussion ensued.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Election of officers was on the agenda. The specific slate, nominations, and results were not captured on the recording.

Motion: To elect officers as follows: Chairman – Matt Gammill; Vice Chairman – Matt Smith; Secretary – William Perry Galloway.

Moved by Tommy Young, seconded by Jason Felton. Motion carried.

BOARD REIMBURSEMENTS / TRAVEL FOR 2026

- Approval of Board member reimbursements/travel for the 2026 calendar year was on the agenda. The Board also discussed the practice of paying Board expenses directly through the Department (rather than through the Farm Bureau, as under prior management).

Motion: To approve Board member reimbursements/travel for the 2026 calendar year;

Moved by Jason Felton, seconded by Matt Smith. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Inoussa Zaki, Chief Financial Officer of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, presented the financial report for the period ending June 30, 2026 (close of state fiscal year 2026). ATTACHMENT (CGSB Funding — Total Annual Collections, 06.30.26).

- Beginning reserve balance (FY26): approximately $1,709,810 cash on hand.
- Gross collections (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026): $1,370,867 total — $1,368,414 from the corn assessment and $2,453 from the grain sorghum assessment.
- Total revenue (net transfers to CGSPB): $3,508,344, including the University of Arkansas set-aside of $461,661 (with CD interest).
- Total expenditures: $1,102,798 — research $939,746; promotion $150,618; total board expenses $12,435.
- Outstanding commitments: approximately $181,582 — Ag Learning Center (~$10,000), Arkansas 4-H (~$15,000), FFA (~$25,000), National Corn Growers

Association (~$29,000), U.S. Grains & Bioproducts Council (~$77,000), plus the Irrigation Yield Contest (billed late in the year). Zaki noted the Department reaches out to vendors for invoices to clear these commitments.

- Ending fund balance available to fund future projects: approximately $2,223,964 (includes the ~$461,000 U of A set-aside).
- FY27 outlook (assumptions): ~$1,800,000 beginning cash on hand; assumed gross collections ~$1,059,034 (based on USDA NASS data); ~$3,282,998 total revenue. Beginning FY27, the treasury fee was waived by governor's letter, and the Department of Finance and Administration will assess a 3% treasury fee on Board assessment revenue. Collection assumptions are subject to change as USDA NASS forecasts update. Prior-year planted corn acreage was ~810,000 (harvested ~790,000).

Motion: Motion to approve the financial report as presented by the Department;

Moved by Trent Dabbs seconded by Matt Smith. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS — FUTURE MEETING DATES

- The Board discussed dates for the upcoming winter meeting, funding meeting, and summer meeting. The Fy26 Winter meeting was set for Wednesday November 4th, 2026. Location mentioned is Fayetteville, Ar. Dr. Slaton will work on a place to hold the meeting. The funding meeting is typically held in February for over two days (Day 1: promotion project reports/review; Day 2: University projects), The date for the Fy27 Funding meeting will be held at the LRSO on February 2nd and February 3rd, 2027. The Summer Meeting is set for Thursday July 8th, 2027. The winter meeting for Fy27 was not discussed or set at this time.

9. Adjourn

- No further business was discussed.

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by Tommy Young, seconded by Matt Smith. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:32pm.

Matt Gammill, Chair