Texas A&M AgriLife Sorghum Tips

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Statewide

Potential Income Losses in Harvesting Dry Sorghum Grain

The standard moisture for sorghum grain at harvest time is 14.0%. If your grain sorghum moisture is above 14.0% you will be docked for the moisture. If you are too much above standard moisture content for sorghum grain your delivery point may reject the grain, especially if they do not have drying capacity.

Common incentives that drive harvesting grain sorghum across Texas as soon as possible include minimizing potential storm and wind damage every day the crop remains in the field; muddy conditions that delay harvest if it rains again; risk of lodging; minimizing late-season weed issues; possible double-cropping scenarios where the sooner the next crop is in the more time it has for growth and maturation.

But there is another potential downside to harvesting dry sorghum—or any grain—when the crop remains in the field, further drying to well below standard moisture content. Namely, the drier the grain, the more grain it takes to make a 100-lb., or cwt., pay unit. In effect, being able to deliver sorghum grain as close as you can up to 14.0% enables you to "sell water." Conversely, as noted above, if grain moisture is above 14.0%, you don't get paid—you get docked.

But how much is the potential income reduction in selling dry sorghum grain that perhaps you could have harvested sooner at somewhat higher moisture? Is it a little? Is it a lot?

Below is a table for sorghum grain with different moisture contents at a range of grain sorghum prices ($/cwt.) to help you understand what the potential for a reduction in your effective per-cwt. sorghum price is as you sell further and further below 14.0%. A link to this table and a **calculator**, entitled "Sorghum Grain Moisture Calculator—Potential Income Loss" is posted on the sorghum page at

Price of Grain Sorghum	Standard Moisture 14.0%	Percent Grain Moisture					
		13.0%	12.0%	11.0%	10.0%	9.0%	8.0%
($/cwt.)	*Dollars lost per cwt. due to reduced grain moisture*						
$5.00	$0.00	-$0.06	-$0.11	-$0.17	-$0.22	-$0.27	-$0.33
$5.50	$0.00	-$0.06	-$0.13	-$0.19	-$0.24	-$0.30	-$0.36
$6.00	$0.00	-$0.07	-$0.14	-$0.20	-$0.27	-$0.33	-$0.39
$6.50	$0.00	-$0.07	-$0.15	-$0.22	-$0.29	-$0.36	-$0.42
$7.00	$0.00	-$0.08	-$0.16	-$0.24	-$0.31	-$0.38	-$0.46
$7.50	$0.00	-$0.09	-$0.17	-$0.25	-$0.33	-$0.41	-$0.49
$8.00	$0.00	-$0.09	-$0.18	-$0.27	-$0.36	-$0.44	-$0.52
$8.50	$0.00	-$0.10	-$0.19	-$0.29	-$0.38	-$0.47	-$0.55
$9.00	$0.00	-$0.10	-$0.20	-$0.30	-$0.40	-$0.49	-$0.59
$9.50	$0.00	-$0.11	-$0.22	-$0.32	-$0.42	-$0.52	-$0.62
$10.00	$0.00	-$0.11	-$0.23	-$0.34	-$0.44	-$0.55	-$0.65

http://lubbock.tamu.edu/programs/crops/sorghum/ (and also soon in the Harvesting/Handling section at http://varietytesting.tamu.edu/grainsorghum/index.htm).

Estimate your potential reduction in effective per-cwt. price for grain sorghum <14.0% moisture from the above table. Access the calculator to determine reduction in potential income per cwt. with your actual %moisture and market grain price ($/cwt.). Furthermore, with grain yield (actual or estimated) you can also calculate your potential reduction in income per acre and per field or farm.

Example:

You harvested grain sorghum at 11.0% moisture at a price of $6.50/cwt. From the table (or the calculator in the online file) you find that you have effectively reduced your price $0.22/cwt. relative to 14.0% moisture. At 5,000 lbs. per acre, this is a loss of potential income of up to $10.96 per acre. And if you have 400 acres of sorghum, then you could have "sold water" and preserved up to $4,382 of income.

Weather, availability of harvest equipment, etc. will dictate when you can actually harvest grain sorghum, and no, you can't hit 14.0% most of the time. But if by more timely harvest you can sell grain sorghum at 12.0% moisture instead of 10.0% moisture, in the above example you can preserve some income (improve $0.14/cwt.; $7.05/acre; and $2,823 for this 400 acres of grain sorghum). The difference is enough to factor in your harvest management decisions to put that money in your pocket.

High Plains

Late-Plant Grain Sorghum

For producers looking at late-planted grain sorghum in the Texas High Plains consult the updated guide "2016 Alternative Crop Options after Failed Cotton and Late-Season Crop Planting for the Texas South Plains." This includes needed information for grain sorghum and other crops for late planting, including last recommended planting dates based on your location, sorghum hybrid maturity, or other crops.

For information on grain sorghum or sorghum family forages for your area, or for specific questions you have on any topic in sorghum, contact your local county agricultural Extension agent, an Extension crop specialist, or sorghum Extension specialists Dr. Ronnie Schnell, College Station, (979) 845-2935, ronschnell@tamu.edu, or Dr. Calvin Trostle, Lubbock, (806) 723-8432, ctrostle@ag.tamu.edu Your question will be relayed to the appropriate Texas A&M AgriLife staff as needed.