K-State announces global collaboration on sorghum and millet

Minton hails ‘crops of the future’ during project’s launch in France

K-State Research and Extension news service

MONTPELIER, France – Kansas State University has announced a project in which it will lead a group effort to work on the world’s challenges related to the production of sorghum and millet.

Ernie Minton, the Eldon Gideon Dean of K-State’s College of Agriculture, officially launched the Global Collaboration for Sorghum and Millet during the opening day of the Global Sorghum Conference in Montpelier, France, where K-State is a lead sponsor.

Minton said the partnership formalizes the university’s long-term global focus on improving the resiliency and sustainability of sorghum and millet in the face of climate change.

“We have found that with these crops, we need to collaborate and share information, research and resources whenever possible to support these orphan grains,” Minton said. “It is a crop that takes a lot of coordination and collaboration between individual scientists because there isn’t the same level of investment as there is in other crops.”

Located in the center of the United States, Kansas State is uniquely positioned to support this global collaboration, Minton said.

“With this investment in collaboration and sharing, we feel we can move the crop forward and work on problems that are global – such as diseases and other kinds of challenges – that may be in Kansas next year,” he said.
Minton added that K-State’s focus on sorghum is two-fold:

- Kansas is the No. 1 sorghum producer in the United States. As a land-grant university and home to the Center for Sorghum Improvement, K-State supports farmers, agriculture and related industry through research, extension and teaching capacity across the sorghum value chain.

  Minton said Kansas is a recognized leader in sorghum science, production, seed systems, irrigation science, food product development and value chain assessment.

- The Global Collaboration on Sorghum and Millet expands the work conducted from 2013 to 2022 through The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sorghum and Millet, commonly known as SMIL, which is hosted by K-State.

“We are excited to bring together funding and research partners who will align with our focus on research, engagement and leadership in supporting the growth of sorghum and millet,” Minton said. “A unique mission of a land grant university is outreach and extension to ensure the technologies developed through research get out to practitioners in the field.”

Minton added that the Global Collaboration on Sorghum and Millet brings together a partner team from the Pan Africa region, as well as research partners, development practitioners and funding collaborators. He said the collaboration focuses on research, engagement and leadership for sustainable development, climate adaptation and the growth of sorghum and millet value chains.

“Our global commitment has also enabled synergies for our Kansas farmers, with the devastating pest, the sugarcane aphid,” said Minton. “The global research network that has been developed enabled plant breeding solutions that could quickly be integrated into the U.S. sorghum hybrids and helped produce a natural resistance to a pest that was devastating the market.

“This new collaboration will continue to focus on leveraging a global research network, capacity strengthening and delivery of appropriate technologies.”

Minton said the project also will continue the university’s focus on cross-sharing research and technologies.

“The Global Collaboration for Sorghum and Millet continues our focus on sorghum as an integral solution to the growing world and changing climate.”

The collaboration will be led by Timothy Dalton and Nat Bascom, who previously led SMIL. More information on the new project is available at GlobalSorghumandMillet.com.

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**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS:** Links used in this story

Global Collaboration on Sorghum and Millet, [https://globalsorghumandmillet.com](https://globalsorghumandmillet.com)
K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus, Manhattan.

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