



# Texas Sorghum



Coby (left) and Chad Kriegshauser

Third generation family-owned produced seed for customers worldwide

## Scott Seed Co.

Hereford, TX • 806-364-3484  
www.scottseed.net



### Company Personnel

- Chad Kriegshauser, Owner
- Coby Kriegshauser, Owner
- Gary "Pops" Kriegshauser
- Jacob Davis
- José Hernandez

### Company Features

- Seed production: Forage, BMR and sweet sorghum; TAM and public certified wheat seed and forage millet seed production.
- Contract seed production.
- Worldwide seed distribution.
- Third generation family ownership and operation.
- Established 1946.

### Suppliers List

- Air screen ..... Clipper®
- Bagger ..... Taylor Products
- Gravity separator ..... Oliver

Although Gary, affectionately known as Pops, is officially retired, he maintains an active interest in the daily operation of the company.

"The success of Scott Seed Company owes much to the strong foundation and commitment that the family started

When Ira Scott began farming in Deaf Smith County, Texas, little did he imagine that 60 years later two of his grandsons would be raising seed on the family farm for export around the world.

As Scott realized there was more money to be made selling open pollinated milo seed than farming, he began selling seed in 1946.

Twenty-five years later in 1971, Betty and Gary Kriegshauser, Scott's daughter and son-in-law bought the seed business. In 1994, Kriegshauser's two sons—Chad and Coby—acquired the family business and retained the original company name.



Gary "Pops" Kriegshauser, Scott Seed Company's "executive advisor."

with in 1946," say Chad and Coby. "Being a small, family owned business is an advantage in the market place. We can produce a better product at a lower cost than bigger companies because of our low overhead and personal attention to each customer's seed."

All of Scott Seed's production is on irrigated land to assure both quality and yield. Most of the seed is grown in Deaf Smith County surrounding Hereford.

Most of the sorghum seed produced by Scott Seed is forage varieties including brown midrib (BMR) hybrids, silage varieties, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids and hybrid pearl millet for silage.

Seed production is certified by the Texas Department of Agriculture, the official Texas seed certifying agency.

### Evaluating New Varieties

Each year, Scott Seed evaluates several new sorghum varieties from Texas A&M University. Varieties are usually released for evaluation two or three years prior to public release.

The evaluation process has become more involved as new BRM and sweet sorghum varieties are developed. Heightened interest in sorghum as a feedstock for biofuel production has added yet another layer of complexity.

"The evaluation process must begin with knowing what your customers want and need," says Chad. "A product is good only to the extent that it is able to meet customer needs. Lately, those needs have become a moving target that is increasingly difficult to anticipate several year away."

Customer expectations for wheat products are also changing as farmers become more concerned about the possible effects of changing weather patterns.

"Wheat yield has always been top-most in farmers' minds, but now they are looking for varieties that will do well in more extreme weather conditions like heat and drought," Coby says. "Adaptability across wide regions is becoming more important."

After two years of observing evaluation plots from Texas northward

through the winter wheat area into western Kansas, Scott Seed negotiated exclusive licensing rights to one of Texas A&M's newest wheat varieties, TAM 304.

"When we looked at this new variety in the light of what our customers are asking for, it was an obvious choice," Coby says.

Registered TAM 304 will be available in limited supply for 2008 planting.

### Sorghum Revolution

For many years, sorghum was a crop relegated to marginal cropland too dry to raise a good corn crop. That posi-

tion began to change when BMR sorghum entered the market eight years ago as a highly digestible forage crop for livestock production.

Ethanol production using sorghum grain has added another important new market for grain sorghum. In Hereford, one ethanol production facility designed to use sorghum is producing 100 million gallons per year (mgy). Another 115 mgy facility is being planned.

Sorghum is also gaining attention as a source of biomass for biofuel production.

"What makes a good variety" ►



Scott Seed Company's sorghum seed is cleaned by a Clipper airscreen (right) and an Oliver gravity (not shown).



Scott Seed Company office, production facility and warehouse, Hereford, TX.

for biomass production is exactly the opposite of what we look for in a grain variety," Chad says.

"Fortunately, some of the varieties we rejected in the past have some good biomass characteristics. By reevaluating them, we can act in anticipation of customer demand for biomass varieties."

There is no guarantee when or how strongly the market for biomass sorghum products will develop. This uncertainty makes anticipation somewhat of a gamble.

"We cannot wait for the market to develop, we have to plan to be ready with biomass products within two years," the brothers say. "Perhaps that market will be slower than that—if it is we will just have to wait."

The newest product the Kriegshauser brothers are evaluating is sweet sorghum. These are very tall varieties with high sugar content. They more closely resemble sugarcane than traditional forage sorghum varieties.

Some university studies estimate that sweet sorghum could yield upwards of 500 gallons of ethanol per acre.

"We want to be ready when the market is ready for us," Chad says. "There is a learning curve for how to best pro-

duce every new variety. We are now in that learning process."

### Sorghum Production

Aside from the weather, the biggest challenge in producing sorghum seed of any variety is maintaining varietal purity. Sorghum pollen can easily drift one or two miles to a neighboring field.

In the past, sorghum seed producers have been able to maintain isolation by coordinating the timing and location of seed production fields. Since everyone has an economic interest in maintain-

ing adequate isolation, that plan worked reasonably well.

Sorghum seed producers in the Texas Panhandle are now facing an increasing "good news-bad news" situation.

New sorghum products are displacing corn and alfalfa as the forage of choice for thousands of milk cows brought into the area by large scale dairies.

This is good news for seed sales, but bad news for seed production. The dairies are planting hundreds of acres of sorghum products with no regard for how pollen could affect seed production.

The ease with which pollen flows is evidenced by the distance between male rows in seed production fields. One pollinator row every 24 or 30 rows, depending of the operator's planting equipment, is sufficient.

In contrast, hybrid corn seed production requires one male row for every four or six female rows.

"Isolation is just another part of producing sorghum seed. It is just like irrigation in this area in that the job seems to get a bit more complicated each year," Chad says.

Through it all, the Kriegshauser brothers maintain an optimistic view of the future. It is their only choice if the company is ever to become a four-generation family farm.

Joe W. Funk, editor



Coby and Chad Kriegshauser explain furrow irrigation and widely-spaced pollinator rows in a sorghum seed production field.