

A man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt, stands in a field of mature sorghum plants. The plants are a mix of brown, green, and orange, indicating they are ready for harvest. The background is a clear blue sky.

HOME **Grown** LEADERSHIP

One of the best times of year is coming to a close. Brown, green and orange delicately light up the afternoon sky. These are the colors of a sorghum field. This versatile, water-sipping crop has many uses, ranging from a sustainable biofuel feedstock, to a beneficial livestock feed to a whole grain, gluten-free source in human diets. This is the end of harvest season for sorghum growers, but for Tim Lust; work isn't finished just yet.

Lust was born in Lazbuddie, Texas, on Dec. 15th 1969. From a very early age, agriculture was a large part of his life. More importantly than agriculture, Lust was raised with a great sense of leadership and dependability.

"Just like most things in life, I learned my characteristics at a very young age," said Tim, "I was very blessed both from a parental standpoint and a grandparent standpoint to have very strong leaders, and very dependable, reliable parents that instilled those values. I believe that is where it all starts."

While living in Lazbuddie, Tim Lust developed a passion for football. He started playing quarterback in jr. high, and by his freshman year of high school, he was the starting quarterback for the Lazbuddie Longhorn's football team.

"He was our youngest son, and he worked with me a whole lot taking care of the cattle and in school, he was always top of his class. He took over quarterback of the football team as a freshman and showed more leadership than most of the upper classmen," said Glen Lust, Tim Lust's father. "He didn't follow the older brothers and sister. He went to Angelo State University, where he walked on and played quarterback and finished out all four years of his degree."

While at in high school at an FFA leadership conference, he met his wife Lea Ann Edwards. Tim started at Angelo State University and Lea Ann began college at Texas Tech University. Lea Ann transferred to Angelo State and continued schooling. Tim and Lea Ann were married at the end of 1990. They both continued at Angelo State until they both received their Bachelor's degrees in 1992. After they finished college, Tim and Lea Ann moved to Lubbock, Texas, where Tim continued with education and began working on his Master's degree at Texas Tech University. While he worked on his master's degree, he began his work in the sorghum industry. He has two sons, Ty and Dru who both play football for the Abernathy Antelopes football team and Tim does his best to travel home for every game.

“Tim is an amazing father and an amazing husband,” said Lea Ann. “Part of his definition of success is to be there and give one hundred percent so he does everything that he can to be at everything that he possibly can be. At the same time. He has raised our children to be strong enough that if he is not there, their world will not collapse.”

Tim continued in sorghum and worked his way through many of the different parts of the sorghum industry.

“I have been in several different roles and most definitely started at more of a program level where I was much more involved in the details in the individual programs and more of the day to day activities,” said Tim.

“Certainly now, I am more in the leadership management, strategic role. Part of that depends on what it is, obviously I am still very active in parts of the legislative process on a day to day basis and I continue to enjoy that. I still believe that it is critical that I stay involved a lot on the day to day aspect of it.”

Currently, Tim is the CEO of National Sorghum Producers (NSP) which is based out of Lubbock, Texas. For the past few years, Tim has been extremely involved in NSP while also establishing and watching the United Sorghum Checkoff Program come to fruition. This is definitely an industry that is currently seeing some great highs due to tremendous efforts of the past years, but they have definitely seen some lows.

“I am proud of being able to lay out a plan of strategic vision that was done back in the early 2000s

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and then be a part of helping implement a lot of that plan that producer leaders put together,” Lust said.

The National Sorghum Producers work hand in hand with many different corporations to make the sorghum industry. Lust works with Wayne Cleveland, Executive Director of Texas Sorghum Producers in Saldado, Texas.

“Tim and I sat in the grain sorghum offices in Lubbock one November and realized that there were only five people that serviced the entire world of

sorghum. That’s a lonely feeling for an entire industry to have so few professional staff,” Cleveland said. “I think it drove Tim to the point of being resolute that the industry would be fixed while on his watch. From there, the concept of an industry-wide membership

or e-membership was born which led way to the now functioning United Sorghum Checkoff Program.”

Lindsay Kennedy, National Sorghum Producers external affairs director, said the NSP and Sorghum Checkoff staff and boards have a ‘Team Sorghum’ mentality to aid sorghum producers and the industry.

“We have a relatively small staff when you compare us to other national commodity organizations, and our motto around the office has often been “do a lot with a little and we do,” said Lindsay. “Our staff and organization are really like a big family. When you have that kind of work environment with a leader and staff who genuinely believe in the purpose and goals of the organization, we do accomplish a lot. It is easy to work hard for a person you respect and an organization that you believe in.”

In both Tim’s family and business life, he expects everyone to strive for excellence and it is not something that he takes lightly.

“In terms of raising children, whatever expectations you set for them, they will probably achieve. This goes back to our personal lives,” said Tim. “If we believe that we are working for a higher purpose than for ourselves or for man and if we believe that we are going to be involved in these activities; then why not try to strive for excellence? It is not perfection. We will never get that done, but if you are going to do it, you might as well do it right.” **T**

