



National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance

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NAFA KICKS OFF FIRST-EVER ALFALFA CHECKOFF PROGRAM

Farmers Asked to Encourage Their Seed Marketers to Facilitate Checkoff

St. Paul, MN – The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) announces the creation of the first-ever *U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (aka Alfalfa Checkoff Program)*, a farmer-funded investment in alfalfa-related research to help drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry.

“Until now, alfalfa was the only major crop without a farmer-funded checkoff program,” said Beth Nelson, NAFA President. “That needed to change in order for alfalfa to remain competitive with other cropping choices.”



The NAFA board of directors voted unanimously to begin a national checkoff program to facilitate a farmer-funded research program to advance industry research. The *U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative*, implemented voluntarily by seed brand, will be assessed at the rate of \$1/bag of alfalfa seed. One-hundred percent of the checkoff funds will be used to support public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems.



The Alfalfa Checkoff Program will be assessed at a rate of \$1/bag, implemented voluntarily by seed brand.



The Alfalfa Checkoff Program has broad grassroots support from state and regional hay associations and farmer members.



Unlike other commodities, alfalfa does not have a common “first purchaser.” Seed marketers are the common industry partner helping to facilitate the checkoff program.



Farmers and industry members will assist in developing research priorities. A request for proposals will be circulated to all known public U.S. alfalfa researchers.



NAFA will not assess any administrative costs, investing 100% of the checkoff funds in alfalfa research.

Alfalfa is key to sustainable agricultural systems and is an economic engine in rural communities – its value for soil conservation, nitrogen fixation, energy savings, crop rotation, and wildlife habitat is unsurpassed. However, alfalfa must offer competitive value for farmers in

order to provide these benefits and maintain or expand acreage base. Research is a key component to remaining competitive.

While NAFA has been successful in securing federal research funding for the Alfalfa & Forage Research Program and the Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative, USDA's public research portfolio needs to be better balanced to provide needed research to the nation's 3rd most valuable field crop.

"We've been making the case to lawmakers of the need for parity among the major crops in public research funding," Nelson added. "This checkoff clearly demonstrates how serious alfalfa farmers are about their commitment to fund alfalfa research. It is imperative we come to the table with our own funding."

The checkoff will support research into the improvement of yields, water conservation, development of new storage and harvest systems, creation of new uses, and other research areas holding the potential to advance the alfalfa industry.

Seed marketers who have committed to facilitating the checkoff, helping farmers invest in the future of the alfalfa industry include:

Alforex Seeds
America's Alfalfa
Browning Seed
Channel
CROPLAN
DEKALB
Dyna-Gro
Fontanelle Hybrids
Forage First
Gold Country Seed
Hubner Seed
Jung Seed Genetics
Kruger Seeds

Latham Hi-Tech Seeds
Legacy Seeds
Lewis Hybrids
NEXGROW
Prairie Creek Seed
Rea Hybrids
S&W Seed Company
Simplot Grower Solutions
Specialty
Stewart
Stone Seed
W-L Research

It's not too late. If your favorite alfalfa brand is not on the list, contact NAFA (651.484.3888) for information on how a seed marketer can become a participating brand.