

FIVE NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH NAFA'S ALFALFA CHECKOFF

Research Projects Funded from California to Virginia

The Alfalfa Checkoff program, also known as the U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (USAFRI), awarded funding to five projects in its recent review of proposals submitted by researchers in response to NAFA's latest request for proposals. Researchers from California to Virginia were the beneficiaries of funding generated by the checkoff, now in its sixth year of enhancing alfalfa research across the country.



"It's encouraging to see new researchers submitting proposals with each new round of funding for NAFA's Alfalfa Checkoff program," said Beth Nelson, NAFA President. "We envisioned this program as one which would re-energize research into alfalfa and forages and that's exactly what we've seen."

NAFA's Alfalfa Checkoff request for proposals generated research projects requesting a total of more than \$1 million from a broad geographic area demonstrating continued demand among researchers for alfalfa research funding. Proposals addressed a wide range of topics intended to drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry - from developing an open-source web-based tool for predicting alfalfa yield and quality to improving irrigated alfalfa yield and water use efficiency - all intended to enhance alfalfa and alfalfa seed production throughout the country. Research projects in California, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, and Virginia were funded. They include: *(project objectives can be viewed on the [NAFA website](#)):*

- The Relationship Between Passage Rate and Degradation Rate of Alfalfa and Its Effect on Digestibility
 - *Gonzalo Ferreira, Virginia Tech*
- Alfalfa Value-Added Characteristics: Screening Cultivars for Beneficial Biochemical Compounds
 - *Jo Heuschele, USDA-ARS (St. Paul, MN)*
- Improving Alfalfa Forage System by Addressing Boron and Sulfur Deficiency
 - *Bruno Pedreira, Kansas State University*
- Carbon Footprint of High-Yielding Irrigated Alfalfa Production in California
 - *Cameron Pittelkow, University of California-Davis*
- Do Insect-Transmitted Viruses Affect Forage Alfalfa Yield and Quality?
 - *Erik Wenninger, University of Idaho*

The NAFA review committee selected projects that best met established research priorities, including: feed value consistency (i.e., harvest, storage, digestibility, sampling); forage quality improvements; new uses and market development; and yield improvements. Proposals were scored on industry need (alignment with USAFRI research priorities); scientific merit; direct benefit to farmers, cost effectiveness; and partnerships.

The Alfalfa Checkoff call for proposals is released twice a year, in May with proposals due in June, and in November with proposals due in December. Final reports continue to roll in and reveal important data and information with regard to alfalfa seed and forage production and are available at http://alfalfa.org/USAFRI_FinalReports.php. Be sure to bookmark this page and continue to monitor it for continuing results throughout the year.

NAFA strongly encourages alfalfa farmers to patronize checkoff-facilitating alfalfa seed brands to support the Alfalfa Checkoff:

Alfalfa Partners – S&W Seed
Alforex Seeds
America's Alfalfa
Channel
CROPLAN
DEKALB
Dyna-Gro
Fontanelle Hybrids
Forage First

FS Brand Alfalfa
Gold Country Seed
Hubner Seed
Innvictis Seed Solutions
Jung Seed Genetics
Kruger Seeds
Latham Hi-Tech Seeds
Legacy Seeds
Lewis Hybrids

NEXGROW
Pioneer
Prairie Creek Seed
Rea Hybrids
Specialty
Stewart
Stone Seed
W-L Alfalfas

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