



Procedures for Forming a Grower Opportunity Zone for Alfalfa Seed Production

INTRODUCTION

A Grower Opportunity Zone (GOZ) is a seed grower defined geography within which a validated super-majority elects to focus on the production of either Adventitious Presence Sensitive (APS) or Genetically Enhanced (GE) alfalfa seed, facilitating meeting isolation requirements for these markets. Within either GOZ, conventional AP-tolerant (APT) seed can be produced in accordance with the applicable NAFA Best Management Practices for that GOZ.

The NAFA coexistence strategy is outlined in a series of documents that can be found on the NAFA website (www.alfalfa.org). It is important that alfalfa seed growers requesting a new GOZ become familiar with the coexistence strategy.

APS GOZ. This is a GOZ for seed production of APS alfalfa seed and conventional alfalfa seed. GEA seed production is not practical within an APS GOZ and would be out of compliance with the NAFA *BMP for GEA Seed Production*.

GE GOZ. This is a GOZ for seed production of GE and conventional alfalfa seed that is destined for markets that are not APS. APS alfalfa seed production is not practical within a GE GOZ. As outlined in NAFA *BMP for GEA Seed Production*, Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) certified seed production isolation requirements apply between GE and conventional seed within a GE GOZ. NAFA *BMP for GEA Seed Production* isolation requirements apply between a new GE seed production field within a GE GOZ and the nearest established conventional or APS seed production field outside the GOZ border.

Procedures for Organizing a GOZ

Step 1 – Request for GOZ. Two or more growers must officially request to organize a NAFA validated GOZ. This request may be mailed, faxed, or emailed to: NAFA, 4630 Churchill St. #1, St. Paul MN 55126; 651.638.0756; nafa@alfalfa.org.

The request must **specify the type of GOZ being requested** (APS or GE) and it must **identify the specific geographic area** for which the GOZ is being requested such as a county or an area defined by specific roads/highways, rivers, or other clearly defined boundaries - GPS coordinates must be provided. NAFA will also request the state certification authority to review the proposed GOZ map for any anomalies; if anomalies are noted NAFA may require an amendment to the proposed boundaries prior to facilitating a vote on the request. The GOZ area must encompass a minimum of 500 seed production acres (qualifying acres include: existing alfalfa seed production acres and new acres to be planted the next planting season to alfalfa seed within the proposed GOZ, for which there are signed production contracts with alfalfa seed production companies).

It is the responsibility of the growers requesting a new or modified GOZ to contact all known alfalfa seed growers in the proposed zone to notify/discuss the proposal with them. A list of all known alfalfa seed growers within the proposed GOZ (including name, farm name, address, city, state, zip, cell phone **and email** – a fax number may be provided for those without email) **must** accompany the request.

Step 2 – Identify Applicable Growers. Upon request for a NAFA validated GOZ, NAFA will notify its Class II members (Genetic Suppliers) and the seed certification authority for the proposed GOZ within two (2) business days to identify alfalfa seed growers within the proposed GOZ.

Step 3 – Voting Site/Absentee Ballot or Electronic/Fax Ballot. NAFA will facilitate a vote on the proposed GOZ. A grower meeting will be held for voting purposes for all proposed GOZs that encompass ≥ 20 alfalfa seed growers.

- A meeting notice will be mailed to each identified grower within the proposed GOZ a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the meeting.
- The notice will identify the time, place and purpose of the meeting. The meeting site will be open for a minimum of one (1) hour from the start time of the meeting for balloting purposes.
- The notice will provide an absentee ballot. If a grower is unable to attend the grower meeting during the specified hour, they will have the option to complete the absentee ballot which must be faxed (fax to 651.638.0756) or scanned/emailed (email to nafa@alfalfa.org) at least one (1) hour prior to the grower meeting in order to be counted.
- NAFA will publish a notice of request to organize a GOZ for a specific geographic area and the grower meeting date and location of vote, along with notice of absentee ballot option, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed GOZ. This notice shall appear no less than three (3) days prior to the meeting.
- NAFA Class II members (Genetic Suppliers) will be encouraged to participate in the grower meeting and respond to questions.

NAFA will have the option to conduct the vote on the proposed GOZ via electronic or faxed ballot for proposed GOZs that encompass <20 alfalfa seed growers.

- An electronic or faxed ballot will be emailed or faxed to each grower within the proposed GOZ a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the deadline ballot submission.
- The ballot must be returned by fax (fax to 651.638.0756) or scan/email (email to nafa@alfalfa.org) by the ballot submission date in order to be counted.
- NAFA can facilitate a conference call to discuss the proposed GOZ if it is determined a call is necessary or if a conference call is requested in the initial request for GOZ.
- Class II members (Genetic Suppliers) will be encouraged to participate in the conference call.

Step 4 – Voting. Each farm entity within the proposed GOZ will be entitled to one vote. Votes will be collected by paper ballot for those GOZs with ≥ 20 growers, and by email or fax for those GOZs with <20 growers. Growers will certify the number of alfalfa seed production acres they have, that they are an alfalfa seed grower within the proposed GOZ, etc., as identified on the ballot.

For the purposes of GOZ validation, a farm entity is operated by an alfalfa seed grower(s) who shares directly in the profits or risk of loss from such entity (i.e., owns or leases land, has an alfalfa seed production contract for either or both of the last two years or for the upcoming planting season).

Confidentiality Notice: Access to data supplied on individual ballots and requested documents are restricted to NAFA staff and voting officials.

Step 5 - Validation. NAFA will validate and certify that a super-majority of $\geq 80\%$ of alfalfa seed growers, or alfalfa seed growers representing $>80\%$ of the alfalfa seed production acres, of those voting within the proposed GOZ have voted to organize a GOZ. If the super majority is not met, NAFA will declare that the vote to organize the proposed GOZ failed.

Step 6 – Notice and Identification of GOZ. Once a GOZ is certified, it will be:

- placed on the CCIA pinning map,
- listed on the NAFA website,
- sent to applicants, Class II, CCIA, state seed certification authority, and state seed association (if applicable).

Once a GOZ is formed, it stays in place until or unless the growers in the GOZ notify NAFA of their intent to change the status – see NAFA Coexistence Document, Grower Opportunity Zones for Seed Production for more information.

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