



NAFA - Year in Review

National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance 2015-2016 Annual Report

NAFA Establishes First-Ever Alfalfa Checkoff Program

The NAFA board of directors voted unanimously to begin a national checkoff program to facilitate a farmer-funded research program to advance industry research. Key components:

- 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 administrative costs, investing 100% of the checkoff funds in alfalfa research.

Until now, alfalfa was the only major crop without a farmer-funded checkoff program. It is a necessity that we invest in public research in order for alfalfa to remain competitive with other cropping choices. The first collections begin January 1, 2017 and will be remitted to NAFA by July 31, 2017.



Facilitating Marketers:

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
ProHarvest Seeds
Rea Hybrids
S&W Seed Company
Simplot Grower Solutions
Specialty
Stewart
Stone Seed
W-L Research



NAFA Dirs. Darrin Unruh & Ron Cornish, Beth Nelson, Rep. David Valadao (R-CA), CA Farmer Tom Barcellos, NAFA Dir. Ray Smith.

NAFA DC Fly-In Builds on Recent Success

The 6th annual NAFA DC Fly-In was held in Washington, DC, on February 9-11. NAFA members built their case for continued funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (AFRP), enhanced funding for alfalfa research at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), an expansion of the current Forage Seeding insurance program, the development of a crop insurance program which protects alfalfa farmers from losses in quality and/or revenue, and more.

AFRP was awarded \$1.35 million in fiscal years '14 and '15, and \$2 million in '16. Building upon this success, NAFA members focused on AFRP priorities, the long list of states receiving research funding, and the increasing inertia within the alfalfa research community, to build the case for additional AFRP funds for 2017. While AFRP funding does not level the playing field in terms of research funding between the nation's third most valuable field crop and program crops such as corn, soybeans, and wheat, it is a step forward in bringing parity to public research funding for alfalfa. NAFA representatives also stressed the need for better funding for alfalfa research at USDA-ARS.

The continued lack of an adequate safety net for alfalfa farmers was the focus of House and Senate Ag Committee member meetings. Due to the fact that alfalfa is not considered a Title I program crop, its farmers are not able to take advantage of Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) available to program crops; this can lead to lenders encouraging farmers to plant commodities which have greater risk protection through ARC or PLC. Thus, it is critical the Risk Management Agency continue efforts to develop a quality and/or revenue program, and expand the forage seeding program.

In addition to Congressional meetings, NAFA met with: EPA to maintain communication about crop protection tools for the industry; USDA's Risk Management Agency to expand and improve its crop insurance programs for the alfalfa industry; and USDA-ARS to discuss the need to increase its financial commitment to alfalfa research.

“NAFA is continuing to make its presence known on Capitol Hill,” said NAFA President Beth Nelson. “We still have a lot of work to do, but the progress we've made since the first DC Fly-In is evident. As alfalfa farmers know – ‘persistence’ is a good thing.”

NAFA Summer Board Meeting Held in Milwaukee, WI

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, WI, served as the location for the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance board of directors summer board meeting on July 28-29. In addition to its meeting, the board took a guided tour of the facilities of Monsanto BioAg, a company specializing in agricultural biologicals to boost productivity.

Special guests included Nicholas Young of Agralytica, the Risk Management Agency's contractor tasked with the responsibility to obtain information and provide analysis to aid in the improvement of the Forage Seeding Program in an effort to better meet the risk management needs of alfalfa farmers, and Andrew Harker of the The Russell Group who gave the board a brief update of the GMO labeling legislation.

Alforex Seeds, Monsanto, NEXGROW, and S&W Seed Company sponsored NAFA's 2016 summer board meeting.

NAFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Alforex Seeds

1st Vice Chair

Leland Tiegs - Class 1
ID Alfalfa & Clover Seed Comm

2nd Vice Chair

Drex Gauntt - Class 3
WA State Hay Growers Assn

Secretary

Doug Rushing - Class 5
Monsanto

Treasurer

Brent Johnson - Class 4
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Philip Bowles - Class 3
CA Alfalfa & Forage Assn

Dick Carter - Class 5
Western AG Enterprises

Chuck Deatherage - Class 1
CA Alfalfa Seed Prod Rsch Board

Ernie Johnson - Class 1
MT Alfalfa Seed Committee

Barb Kinnan - Class 3
NE Alfalfa Mktg Assn

Mike Lauwers - Class 3
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Mark McCaslin - Class 2
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Robin Newell - Class 2
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Gary Nowaczyk - Class 4
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John Ruedinger - Class 3
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Darrin Unruh - Class 3
KS Forage & Grassland Council

Mark Wagoner - Class 1
WA Alfalfa Seed Comm

Dan Wiersma - Class 4
DuPont Pioneer

Mark Boggess - Ex Officio
U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center

Dan Putnam - Ex Officio
University of California

Ray Smith - Ex Officio
University of Kentucky

Dan Undersander - Ex Officio
University of Wisconsin

Doug Walsh - Ex Officio
Washington State University

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the ability of all segments of the alfalfa and forage industry to compete effectively while maintaining access to global markets and meeting the requirements of those markets. The objective of NAFA is to be a forum for consensus building among the various stakeholders and to be an effective advocate on behalf of the alfalfa and forage industry.

EDUCATION

2016 Variety Leaflet

NAFA's 2016 "Alfalfa Variety Ratings - Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistance Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties" was published in the November issue of *Hay & Forage Grower* magazine. Referred to as the Variety Leaflet, it gives marketers the opportunity to list alfalfa varieties approved by the National Alfalfa Variety Review Board. The variety leaflet is a valuable resource for alfalfa farmers looking for information on the varieties which may perform well in a given region.

The information contained in the Variety Leaflet can also be found using NAFA's searchable database which allows farmers to search for varieties using up to 23 different parameters, including variety name, marketer, fall dormancy, winter survival, and disease resistance. This convenient tool makes finding the perfect variety as effortless as possible. To use the Alfalfa Variety Ratings Database, go to alfalfa.org/varietyratings.php.

The 2016 Variety Leaflet contained information on 178 alfalfa varieties from 22 companies. The Variety Leaflet is available for purchase or download on the NAFA website at alfalfa.org.

NAFA's 2015 Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS) – Fort Wayne, IN

One of the most successful programs available for training industry professionals about alfalfa growth and management was held in Fort Wayne, IN, November 17-19, 2015. Sponsored by NAFA, the Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS) featured the latest information with regard to genetics, varieties, seed production, growth and development, soils, fertility, management, and a host of other topics intended to give participants the knowledge they need to make the most of their alfalfa investment. The 2015 seminar featured nationally recognized speakers: Dr. Kim Cassida, Michigan State University; Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Randy Shaver, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Marvin Hall, Penn State University; and Dr. Neal Martin, former director of the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison, Wisconsin.



POLICY INITIATIVES

CROP INSURANCE

NAFA Representatives Met with RMA

As USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) continues its progress towards the development of a new or improved insurance product which would allow alfalfa farmers to insure themselves against losses in both revenue and quality, NAFA representatives provided their input at a September 2015 meeting in Kansas City.

Agralytica, the contractor selected by RMA to obtain information and provide analysis to aid in the development of either a new or improved insurance policy to better meet the risk management needs of alfalfa farmers, was on hand as well to present findings from the previous year's listening sessions held in California, Kansas, Kentucky, and Wisconsin.

Agralytica completed its Data Gathering Report and presented to RMA information which identified issues related to insuring alfalfa and alfalfa-grass mixtures for quality/revenue, and outlined recommendations for modifications to the current program or the creation of a new insurance program.

CROP PROTECTION TOOLS

EPA

NAFA continues to foster its relationship with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials. NAFA, in an effort to enhance its oversight efforts, established two internal committees, hay and seed, to monitor product re-registration and phase-out activities at EPA. Both seed farmers and forage farmers are encouraged to contact NAFA with a list of crop protection tools important to their operations; NAFA will add those products to its list of products to be monitored and supported.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

NAFA Fosters Coexistence by Adding to List of Grower Opportunity Zones

During the 2015-'16 fiscal year, NAFA continued to add to its list of approved Grower Opportunity Zones (GOZ). NAFA received and approved requests by alfalfa seed farmers to designate Stillwater and parts of Yellowstone counties in Montana; parts of Bighorn County in Wyoming; and Broadwater County in Montana as Adventitious Presence-Sensitive (APS) GOZs. NAFA also received and approved requests by alfalfa seed farmers to designate parts of Big Horn and Park counties in Wyoming and Fremont and

parts of Natrona County in Wyoming as Genetically Enhanced (GE) GOZs. NAFA also approved a request to expand the borders of the previously approved GE GOZ which included parts of Umatilla and Morrow counties in Oregon.

Since the start of NAFA's Grower Opportunity Zone program, NAFA has approved the formation of 27 GOZs, 21 GE GOZs and six APS GOZs. Visit NAFA's GOZ webpage for a complete list of GOZs and their corresponding maps.

NAFA Successful in Obtaining Increase in AFRP Funding

After continued efforts by NAFA representatives to underscore the critical need for research funding for the alfalfa industry, lawmakers in Washington, DC, increased funding for the Alfalfa and Forage Research Program (AFRP) to \$2 million.

NAFA's effort to procure research funding began with the 2008 Farm Bill in which it was successful in securing language authorizing the AFRP under the bill's High Priority Research and Extension Areas. Working with Congressional offices, NAFA was able to maintain the AFRP language in the 2014 Farm Bill, providing continued authorizing language for the program.

In 2014, thanks to Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), \$1.35 million in funding for the AFRP was included in the FY '14 budget reconciliation bill. Funding for the AFRP continued in FY '15 at \$1.35 million, and increased to \$2 million in FY '16.

AFRP funding is used for: 1) improving alfalfa forage yield and seed yield through better nutrient, water and/or pest management; 2) improving persistence of alfalfa stands by lessening biotic or abiotic stresses; 3) improving alfalfa forage and seed harvesting and storage systems to optimize economic returns; 4) improving estimates of alfalfa forage quality as an animal feed to increase forage usage in animal feeds; and/or 5) breeding to address biotic and abiotic stresses that impact alfalfa forage yield and persistence and the production of seed for propagation.

RESEARCH

Over \$1.2 Million Awarded for Alfalfa Research

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced the award recipients of more than \$1.2 million in Alfalfa and Forage Research Program (AFRP) funding to study an array of issues affecting the alfalfa industry. The AFRP was created to support integrated, collaborative research and technology transfer to improve the efficiency and sustainability of alfalfa forage and seed production systems. It encourages projects that establish multi-disciplinary networks to address priority national or regional science needs of the alfalfa industry.

The following are the 2015 award recipients:

AFRP Project Title	Principal Investigator	Collaborators	Award
Re-Establishing IPM Recommendations for Aphids in Alfalfa Hay in the Low Desert	Ayman Mostafa, Univ. of Arizona	Univ. of CA; UT State	\$206,000
Developing Molecular Markers for Enhancing Resistance to Drought and High Salinity in Alfalfa	Long Xi Yu, USDA-ARS, Prosser	Cornell; UT ARS	\$215,000
Potato Leafhopper Threshold Revised for Alfalfa Host Resistance and Alfalfa Grass Mixtures	William Lamp, Univ. of Maryland	OH State; Univ. of WI	\$215,000
Impact of Microbial Inoculants on the Quality and Fermentation Stability of Alfalfa Round-Bale Baleage	Rocky Lemus, Mississippi State Univ.	Univ. of GA; Univ. of WI	\$213,333
Management Tools to Improve Forage Quality and Persistence of Alfalfa	Debbie Cherney, Cornell Univ.	Univ. of MN; Univ. of KY	\$203,213
Subsurface Drip Irrigation, Deficit Irrigation Strategies, and Improved Varieties to Improve Alfalfa Water Use Efficiency Under Drought Conditions	Dan Putnam, Univ. of California	Univ. of AZ; NM State	\$195,000

"The AFRP continues to pay dividends to the industry," said NAFA President Beth Nelson. "This research helps keep alfalfa competitive with other cropping choices."

AFRP project submission must include a collaboration among universities or other public research entity in at least three states as a requirement of funding. Researchers from 13 states will share in this funding.

The AFRP projects are archived on NAFA's research database at alfalfa.org/research.php. Information includes project objectives, program priorities, and information regarding request for applications. There is also a search tool which allows users to search for projects based on keywords, researcher, university/entity, year of project, category, or research program. As projects reach completion, results will be posted.

2015-2016 MEMBERS/SPONSORS

DIAMOND

Alforex Seeds
Forage Genetics International
Monsanto
S&W Seed Co.

PLATINUM

America's Alfalfa
CA Alfalfa Seed Prod. Research Board
CROPLAN by WinField United
DEKALB
Hay & Forage Grower
NEXGROW
WA Alfalfa Seed Commission
W-L Research

GOLD

DuPont Pioneer
ID Alfalfa & Clover Seed Commission
John Deere
Summit Seed Coatings
Western AG Enterprises

SILVER

CA Alfalfa & Forage Association
ID Hay & Forage Association
J.R. Simplot
KS Forage & Grassland Council
MacDon Industries Ltd.
Midwest Forage Association
MT Alfalfa Seed Committee
NE Alfalfa Marketing Association
NV Alfalfa Seed Commission
WA State Hay Growers Association
WY Alfalfa Seed Council

ASSOCIATE

American Seed Trade Association
Anderson Hay & Grain Co.
Calibrate® Technologies
FMC
Harvest Tec
Hay Day Farms, Inc.
MI Forage Council
Monsanto BioAg
Nelson Irrigation Corporation
NM Hay Association
OR Hay & Forage Association
San Joaquin Valley Hay Growers Association
The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
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Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative Funding Distributed to Seven Projects

The Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative (APRI) awarded \$100,000 in funding to seven research projects focused on supporting the health of non-*Apis* alfalfa pollinators. APRI, a coordinated research effort managed by the Pollinating Insects Research Unit in Logan, UT, focuses on: management for crop pollination; population sustainability; environmental safety; epidemiology and disease management; and genetics. The program is managed by Theresa Pitts-Singer of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (located at the Logan Bee Lab in Logan, UT).

Projects funded for 2016 include:

APRI Project Title	Principal Investigator	Award
Fight Fire with Fire: Microbes and Parasites of Alfalfa Leafcutting Bees	Quinn McFrederick, University of California-Riverside	\$25,607
Effects of Pest Management Practices on Pests and Alfalfa Leafcutting Bees in Alfalfa Seed	Jim Barbour, Idaho State University	\$12,743
Enhancing Pollination by Attracting & Retaining Leafcutting Bees (<i>Megechile rotundata</i>) in Alfalfa Seed Production Fields	Zainulabeuddin Syed, University of Notre Dame	\$14,317
Development of Traps to Control Hymenopteran Pests of <i>Megachile rotundata</i> During Nesting, Storage, & Incubation	Theresa Pitts-Singer, USDA-ARS	\$5,860
Exploring Strategies to Control Bomber Flies That Attack Alkali Bees	James Cane, USDA-ARS PIRU, Logan, UT	\$5,400
Characterizing Microbial Associates of Alkali Bees	Karen Kapheim, Utah State University	\$18,122
Enhancing and Protecting Populations of Alfalfa Seed Pollinators	Doug Walsh, Washington State University	\$17,951

Bees play a vital role in alfalfa seed production. Funding for the Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative provides valuable resources necessary to ensure the availability of healthy non-*Apis* pollinator populations essential for alfalfa seed production.

In an effort to make information about the APRI more assessable, NAFA has created a research database on its website. By clicking the Research tab at alfalfa.org you will find comprehensive information regarding the Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative, including a search tool which allows you to search for projects based on keywords, researcher, university/entity, year of project, category, or research program.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Hay & Forage Grower Magazine

NAFA continues its agreement with *Hay & Forage Grower* magazine as its official publication. As NAFA's official publication, *Hay & Forage Grower* maintains the exclusive right to publish NAFA's annual "Alfalfa Variety Ratings Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistance Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties." *Hay & Forage Grower* also highlights news and information regarding NAFA activities. In March, an article featured information regarding NAFA's 2016 DC Fly-In:



NAFA Promotes National Forage Week

The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) joined forces with the American Forage & Grassland Council (AFGC) to promote National Forage Week, an effort to raise awareness of the importance and impact of forages. *National Forage Week* was June 19-25.

The *National Forage Week* campaign is designed to raise awareness and educate the public about the role forages play in dairy and meat consumption, as well as the economic impact and environmental benefits they hold. As consumers become increasingly interested in where their food is sourced, how it is produced, and its role in the production of food and fiber, it is important to provide the type of information necessary to give them greater confidence in their food purchases.

While forages represent the nation's 3rd most valuable field crop, trailing only corn and soybeans, very few are aware of the many benefits they hold. Forages account for about 25% of the total value of U.S. agriculture, occupy about 50% of the total land area of the U.S., and provide food and habitat for deer, antelope, upland birds, and hundreds of species of insects. Additionally, forages feed 109 million head of livestock in the U.S. (more than the combined population of the top four most populated states of California, Texas, Florida, and New York).

"Forage crops are some of the most environmentally friendly and economically important crops grown on our landscape today," said Beth Nelson, President of the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance. "Although forages tend to be underrecognized by the public at large, they play critical roles in livestock production, carbon sequestration, and reducing soil erosion, pesticide usage, and fertilizer application. *National Forage Week* is a great way to remind consumers about just how important forages are to their everyday lives."

National Forage Week included social media blitzes, photo fliers for local circulation, cameo videos, and email blasts and press releases.

