



## Alfalfa “Persistence” Comes in Many Forms

While “persistence” is generally defined in the alfalfa industry as *the survival of an alfalfa stand over time*, the persistence the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) has demonstrated in efforts to advocate on behalf of our industry is proving to be just as valuable, showing significant results.

Since its inception in 2006, NAFA has been “persistent” in its efforts to convince lawmakers of the importance of one of the nation’s most valuable crops, expressing the need for a viable safety net as well as the need for research funding to remain competitive with other cropping choices.

For NAFA, 2013-14 was a watershed year – there are clear indications our persistence is paying off in a big way. Here are just a few products of NAFA’s persistence:

### \$1.35 Million in AFRP Research Funding

After years of effort on the part of NAFA to convince lawmakers of the critical need for research funding for our industry, Capitol Hill finally listened.

Efforts to procure research funding began with the 2008 Farm Bill in which NAFA was successful in securing language authorizing the Alfalfa and Forage Research Program (AFRP). NAFA worked to maintain the AFRP language in the 2014 Farm Bill, providing continued authorizing language for the research program.

In 2014, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) and others, \$1.35 million was appropriated for the AFRP.

While the timeframe for the request for proposals was shorter than desirable, there were still 23 applications submitted requesting a total of \$3,773,606. The review committee had the difficult task of determining which projects would be the first ever to receive AFRP funding. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced the eight award recipients in October (see chart).

AFRP Project Title	Principal Investigator	Award
The Effect of Hay Rake Type on Ash Content of Alfalfa Hay	Dan Undersander Univ. of Wisconsin	\$155,884
Developing an Alfalfa Hay Export Market in the Humid Eastern United States	Chris Teutsch Virginia Tech	\$156,140
Root Traits to Enhance Nutrient and Water Use in Alfalfa	Deborah Samac USDA-ARS	\$156,230
Subsurface Drip Irrigation, Deficit Irrigation Strategies, and Improved Varieties to Improve Alfalfa Water Use Efficiency Under Drought Conditions	Dan Putnam Univ. of California	\$156,254
Using a New In Vitro Method and Fiber Model (TTNDFD) to Improve Estimates of Digestibility of Alfalfa for Dairy Cattle	Dave Combs Univ. of Wisconsin	\$156,280
Nutritive Value and Forage Accumulation of Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Mixtures as Influenced by Forage Management	Renata La Guardia Nave Univ. of Tennessee	\$156,287
Yield Improvement and Fall Dormancy Characterization in Alfalfa	Charlie Brummer Univ. of California	\$156,287
Implementing Lygus Management Strategies in Alfalfa Seed Production	Doug Walsh Washington State Univ.	\$156,675

### \$100,000 in APRI Research Funding

USDA-ARS provided \$100,000 to conduct a coordinated research effort for non-Apis alfalfa pollinators. This funding is devoted to ensuring the availability of healthy non-Apis pollinator populations essential for alfalfa seed production and focuses on Management for Crop Pollination; Population Sustainability; Environmental Safety; Epidemiology and Disease Management; and Genetics. Bees play a critical role in alfalfa seed production and this funding provides valuable resources necessary to ensure the availability of healthy non-Apis pollinator populations.

The project is managed by Theresa Pitts-Singer of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (located at the Logan Bee Lab in Logan, UT). Dr. Pitts-Singer worked with NAFA and its Class I members (state/regional seed associations) to establish program priorities and review proposals. Five projects received funding in 2014 - for a list of projects see the NAFA Annual Report.

### Development of New Crop Insurance Policy for Alfalfa Producers

As directed in the 2014 Farm Bill, RMA selected a contractor, Agralytica, to obtain data and information to aid in the development of a new and/or improved insurance policy to better meet the risk management needs of alfalfa producers.

Agralytica held a series of four listening sessions nationwide to identify issues related to improving the current APH program and exploring interest in new risk management tools such as a quality/revenue program available to other major crops. Agralytica will produce a Data Gathering Report to be utilized in the actual development of a new plan of insurance or modifications to the current program. NAFA will continue to work with RMA for improved safety net options for our industry.

### NAFA’s “Alfalfa Variety Ratings” Now Available in Searchable Online Database

NAFA’s popular “Alfalfa Variety Ratings” publication (included in this issue of Hay & Forage Grower) is now more convenient with a new online tool to help you find varieties best suiting your needs. The database allows you to search by marketer, fall dormancy, winter survival, pest resistance, etc. This one-of-a-kind, searchable database provides a quick and easy tool for comparing varieties.

Try it today! Visit [www.alfalfa.org/varietyratings.php](http://www.alfalfa.org/varietyratings.php)