



National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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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.*

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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	Latham Hi-Tech Seeds
America's Alfalfa	Legacy Seeds
Browning Seed	Lewis Hybrids
Channel	NEXGROW
CROPLAN	Prairie Creek Seed
DEKALB	Rea Hybrids
Dyna-Gro	S&W Seed Company
Fontanelle Hybrids	Simplot Grower Solutions
Forage First	Specialty
Gold Country Seed	Stewart
Hubner Seed	Stone Seed
Jung Seed Genetics	W-L Research
Kruger Seeds	

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.

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Media Availability:

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