



NAFA - Year in Review

National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance 2018-2019 Annual Report

Senator Jerry Moran Earns NAFA's Outstanding Service Award

For his efforts in securing \$2 million in research funding for alfalfa at USDA's Agricultural Research Service, continued funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS), and for his unwavering support for the nation's alfalfa seed and alfalfa forage farmers, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) was awarded NAFA's 2019 Outstanding Service Award. The award recognizes and rewards significant contributions to the alfalfa industry.

Senator Moran was presented with the award during his visit with a contingent of NAFA representatives during NAFA's 9th Annual DC Fly-In.



Sen. Moran, Darrin Unruh

Research Funding, Safety Net the Focus of 9th Annual DC Fly-In



Scott Duffner, Ron Comish, Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA), Dan Putnam, Chelsea Russell, Mike Lauwers.

A greater investment in public research devoted to alfalfa and legitimate risk management tools providing a safety net for alfalfa farmers were the focus of the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance's 9th Annual DC Fly-In held February 4-7. With more than 100 agency and Capitol Hill meetings, NAFA representatives met with lawmakers to stress the importance of increased funding for alfalfa research at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), as well as increased funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS) administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Current support within USDA for alfalfa research pales in comparison to major program crops despite the fact that alfalfa is the nation's 3rd most valuable field crop.

Meetings with House and Senate Ag Committee members focused on the continued need for improved risk management tools to provide protection against losses in revenue and quality, a product

currently available to farmers of many other program crops. Additionally, since alfalfa is not a program crop, the risk management tools contained in the Farm Bill – Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage – are not available to alfalfa farmers. Addressing this disparity would end the incentive for farmers to shift acres away from alfalfa into other crops currently covered by those programs. Meetings were also held with members of the House and Senate Ag Appropriations Committees to discuss funding needs for the ASAFS and investments in alfalfa research at USDA-ARS. The public research investment devoted to alfalfa is only a fraction of that dedicated to program crops.



Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND), Ben Kuhn.

NAFA's DC Fly-In participants also met with: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to present information regarding how alfalfa seed is produced, the kinds of pollinators alfalfa seed farmers use, and the great lengths to which alfalfa seed farmers go to protect, maintain, and enhance their pollinators; USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) to discuss risk management tools needed by alfalfa farmers to reach parity with those available to other major crops; USDA-ARS to discuss how best to use limited research funding to the greatest benefit of the alfalfa industry; and USDA-NIFA to discuss ASAFS. "It's extremely important that we continue a dialogue with lawmakers," said Beth Nelson, President of the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance. "We've made tremendous strides in advocating for alfalfa industry priorities, but we need to remain vigilant and persistent in our efforts if we want that success to continue."

Corteva Hosts NAFA Summer Board Meeting

The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) held its summer board meeting June 24-26 near Des Moines, IA. The meeting was hosted by NAFA member Corteva and held near the company's business operations in Johnston, IA. NAFA board members met to discuss industry issues and tour the Corteva facility.

Ag Secretary Hears from NAFA Board Member During Listening Session

NAFA board member and Washington alfalfa seed farmer Mark Wagoner of Touchet, WA, had the opportunity to talk to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue about issues affecting the alfalfa industry at a listening session in Richland, WA. Secretary Perdue was in Washington to visit with nearly 200 area farmers about trade, tariffs, farm labor, and regulatory reform. He fielded questions as the guest of U.S. Congressman Dan Newhouse.

Wagoner encouraged the Secretary to focus on addressing trade issues with China, particularly its use of a zero tolerance policy on the importation of biotechnology as an artificial trade barrier. "I was clear in my discussion with Secretary Perdue that we need help in convincing China to accept alfalfa biotech traits in order to help the industry. I also made sure the Secretary was well-aware of how important alfalfa is to not only this part of the country but nationwide."

Secretary Perdue offered assurances that he did indeed know alfalfa was a huge and important crop in the U.S., and that the Trump administration 'has farmers' backs' if tough moves on trade continue to disrupt their businesses. "President Trump doesn't expect you to bear the brunt of trade disruption," said Perdue, a veterinarian and former governor of Georgia.

Congressman Dan Newhouse, himself a farmer, added his peers are concerned about trade disputes and disruptive tariffs, but support the goal of better trade deals.



Rep. Newhouse, Mark Wagoner, Secretary Perdue.

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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.

POLICY INITIATIVES

CROP INSURANCE

NAFA Working with RMA to Improve Forage Seeding, Forage Production Insurance Products

Improvements to risk management tools available to alfalfa farmers is an industry priority. NAFA's crop insurance committee continues to work closely with USDA's Risk Management Agency to address insurance product shortcomings in order to offer reliable risk management tools for the alfalfa industry competitive with those offered to other major crops.

CROP PROTECTION TOOLS

Crop Protection Tool Committees

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

NAFA Gives Pollinator Presentation to EPA Officials

NAFA gave an educational presentation to EPA regarding the importance of pollinators to the alfalfa seed industry. Washington State University entomologist Doug Walsh and alfalfa seed farmer Tim Wagoner led the presentation covering how alfalfa seed is produced, the kinds of pollinators alfalfa seed farmers use, and the steps alfalfa seed farmers take to protect, maintain, and enhance their pollinators.

While crop protection tools are necessary to ward off harmful pests, bee safety is a top priority for alfalfa seed farmers. The partnerships between EPA, NAFA, State Departments of Agriculture, and alfalfa seed farmers have benefited the alfalfa seed industry, while protecting bees which are critical to the successful production of alfalfa seed. Continuing to cultivate and enhance this relationship is an ongoing priority for NAFA.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

NAFA Fosters Coexistence

NAFA continues to foster industry coexistence between producers of genetically enhanced, conventional, and organic alfalfa seed production by facilitating the formation of grower opportunity zones (GOZs), and annually reviewing dynamic coexistence documents for industry use.

ASAFS Increased to \$3 Million for FY 2019

NAFA was successful in securing a \$750,000 increase in funding for the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS) for fiscal year 2019, bringing the total allocation to \$3 million. In 2014, thanks to Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), \$1.35 million in funding for the ASAFS was included in the FY '14 budget. Funding for the ASAFS continued in FY '15 at \$1.35 million, was increased to \$2 million in FY '16, and was increased again for FY '17 and FY '18 to \$2.25 million. ASAFS priorities include: Increase alfalfa forage and seed yields, forage quality, and profitability; Reduce biotic and abiotic stresses and costs of production through improved management practices, plant breeding; Improve alfalfa forage and storage systems to optimize returns; Develop methods to estimate alfalfa forage yield and quality; and Explore novel uses for alfalfa.

ARS Alfalfa Funding Increased \$1 Million for FY 2019

Working with lawmakers on the House and Senate Ag Appropriations Committees, NAFA was able to secure a \$1 million increase in recurring funding for alfalfa research at ARS, in addition to the \$1 million increase in FY 2018. Since this is recurring, FY 2019 funding is a total of \$2 million. While modest in terms of overall funding, this is a great step toward leveling the 'research funding playing field' with other major crops and should pave the way for future increases. This second million dollar increase will be dedicated to hiring scientists to work in the area of forage quality research. NAFA will continue its efforts to increase ARS appropriations to fund critical alfalfa research.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

Hay & Forage Grower Magazine

NAFA continues its agreement with *Hay & Forage Grower* (HFG) magazine as its official publication. HFG maintains the exclusive right to publish NAFA's annual "Alfalfa Variety Ratings – Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistance Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties." HFG also highlights news and information regarding NAFA activities.

HFG began featuring the results of research projects funded through NAFA's Alfalfa Checkoff. The feature focused on project results and demonstrates how your checkoff dollars are working for you - the alfalfa farmer.

**Hay & Forage
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RESEARCH

NIFA ASAFS Funding Goes to Seven Alfalfa Research Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded funding to seven projects in the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS).

Now in its fifth year, the ASAFS 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.

Project submissions must include a collaboration among organizations in at least two states as a requirement of funding. Researchers from 11 states will share in this funding. ASAFS supports the development of improved alfalfa forage and seed production systems.

NIFA awarded funding to the following 2018 recipients:

ASAFS Project Title	Principal Investigator	Collaborators	Award
Developing Alfalfa Varieties for High Salinity Production Systems	Dan Putnam, Univ. of California-Davis	UT State	\$300,000
Precision Agriculture Tools for Optimizing Alfalfa Production and Marketing	Kim Cassida, Michigan State Univ.	Univ. of WI-River Falls	\$299,977
Evaluating Alfalfa Winter Survival	Craig Sheaffer, Univ. of Minnesota	SD State Univ. Univ. of WI	\$297,557
Protecting Alfalfa Yield from Weevil Damage in the Intermountain West Region	Kevin Wanner, Montana State Univ.	UT State Univ. Univ. of WY	\$294,200
Genomics Enabled Purging Selection to Develop 200 Alfalfa Inbred Lines Toward High Yield Hybrid Production	Zhiwi Zhang, Washington State Univ.	USDA-ARS (Prosser, WA) USDA-ARS (Pullman, WA) USDA-ARS (Logan, UT)	\$295,000
Quantifying, Predicting, and Modeling the Effects of Machinery Traffic on Alfalfa Yield and Forage Quality	Brian Luck, Univ. of Wisconsin	Univ. of GA	\$299,917
Resilience of Alfalfa Cultivars to Variable Environments	Valentin Picasso Risso, Univ. of Wisconsin	Univ. of FL; Univ. of CA - Davis; Univ. of MN	\$299,980

To keep tabs on the progress of these projects, be sure to check out NIFA's research database to find comprehensive information regarding the alfalfa industry's most important research programs – the ASAFS, the Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative (APRI), and U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (USAFRI), better known as the Alfalfa Checkoff. Information is available including individual project objectives, program priorities, and information regarding each program's request for applications. Also available is a search tool allowing users to search for projects based on keywords, researcher, university/entity, year of project, category, or research program. As projects are completed, results will be posted to the site. Please take a moment to visit the site (alfalfa.org/research.php) for more information.

Five Projects Receive Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative Funding

The Alfalfa Pollinator Research Initiative (APRI) awarded \$100,000 to five 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 Diana Cox-Foster of USDA-ARS (located at the Logan Bee Lab in Logan, UT). 2019 projects:

APRI Project Title	Principal Investigator	Award
Impact of Immune Stress on Pathogen Susceptibility & Life History Traits in <i>Nomia melanderi</i>	Karen Kapheim, Utah State University	\$24,983
Enhancing & Protecting Populations of Alfalfa Seed Pollinators	Doug Walsh, Washington State University	\$25,000
Impact of Organosilicone Spray Adjuvants Upon the Health and Reproduction of the Alfalfa Leaf Cutting Bee	Diana Cox-Foster, USDA-ARS, Logan, UT	\$19,739
Chalkbrood Control Potential of Hypochlorous Acid in Managed Alfalfa Leafcutting Bee Populations	Ellen Klinger, Diana Cox-Foster, USDA-ARS, Logan, UT	\$9,961
Study of Life Cycles of <i>Melittobia</i> and <i>Pteromalus</i> in Populations of <i>Megachile rotundata</i> in Summer, Fall & Winter	Theresa Pitts-Singer, USDA-ARS, Logan, UT	\$20,317

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GOLD

John Deere
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Western AG Enterprises
WY Alfalfa Seed Growers Association

SILVER

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FMC
ID Hay & Forage Association
J.R. Simplot
KS Forage & Grassland Council
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NE Alfalfa Marketing Association
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NV Alfalfa Seed Commission
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ALFALFA CHECKOFF FUNDS 17 PROJECTS IN 2018-'19

Proposals of 17 researchers were approved for funding in the second year of NAFA's Alfalfa Checkoff (U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative). Requests for proposals in June and November garnered more than 30 proposals requesting over \$1.1 million in funding. "The Alfalfa Checkoff gains momentum with each new round of funding, and continues to be a valuable asset to the industry," said Beth Nelson, NAFA President. "The Checkoff is funding important alfalfa research we believe will have the greatest impact within the alfalfa community." Projects funded included:

USAFRI Project Title	Principal Investigator
Maximizing Alfalfa's Yield Potential	Charles Brummer, University of California-Davis
Characterizing Benefits of Alfalfa in Rotation & Communicating Value of Environmental Services to the Public	Dan Putnam, University of California-Davis
Evaluating Hand-Held NIRS Units for Measuring Forage Quality of Fresh-Chopped Alfalfa & Alfalfa Hay & Haylage	Jerry Cherney, Cornell University
Analysis of Root Carbohydrates in Alfalfa Treated with Four Harvest Intervals & Five Potassium Rates in the Southeast	Jennifer Tucker, University of Georgia
Identifying Optimal Alfalfa Germplasm Types & Characteristic for Compatibility & Performance in Mixed Cropping Systems	Brandon Schlautman, The Land Institute (KS)
Regional Characterization of Alfalfa Manure Legacy Impacts on Soil Quality in Crop Rotations	Joshua Gamble, USDA-ARS (MN)
"Alfalfa, Wildlife, and the Environment" Publication Update	Craig Sheaffer, University of Minnesota
Plant Population & Stem Counts to Predict Yield of Modern Alfalfa Varieties	Craig Sheaffer, University of Minnesota
Impact of Poultry Litter Application on Yield & Quality of Alfalfa Grown in MS	Brett Rushing, Mississippi State University
Impacts of Winter Grazing on Alfalfa Production	Emily Meccage, Montana State University
Potassium Fertilization & Its Impact on Yield, Quality, & Winter Hardiness of Alfalfa	Marisol Berti, North Dakota State University
Spring Black Stem & Stemphylium Leaf Spot Resistance Screening in the USDA-ARS National Plant Germplasm System's <i>Medicago spp.</i> Genetic Resources	Brian Irish, USDA-ARS (WA)
Developing Practical Phosphorus & Potassium Tissue Test Recommendations & Utilizing Struvite in Modern Alfalfa Systems	Steve Norberg, Washington State University
Integrated Pest Management of Weevils 2019	Doug Walsh, Washington State University
Side-by-Side Evaluation of Preservation Alternatives for Alfalfa Hays	Wayne Coblenz, USDFRC (WI)
Sustainable Management of Waterhemp in Established Alfalfa for Dairy Systems	Mark Renz, University of Wisconsin
Enzyme-Assisted Protein Isolation from Alfalfa Leaves	Matt Digman, Youngmi Kim, University of Wisconsin-River Falls



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NAFA strongly encourages alfalfa farmers to patronize checkoff-participating alfalfa seed brands to support the U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative. (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.)

EDUCATION

2019 Variety Leaflet

NAFA released the 2019 edition of its popular "*Alfalfa Variety Ratings - Winter Survival, Fall Dormancy & Pest Resistant Ratings for Alfalfa Varieties*" - a useful tool for hay and dairy farmers, extension specialists, agri-business personnel or anyone involved in the production of alfalfa. The publication is unlike any other in providing an extensive listing of alfalfa varieties and their corresponding ratings for fall dormancy, winter survival, bacterial wilt, aphanomyces, leafhopper, and a host of other pests, to help make educated decisions about varieties which will perform best in your environment. All varieties listed in the *Alfalfa Variety Ratings* publication can be purchased in the United States for the 2019 production year. The 2019 edition features 182 alfalfa varieties from 22 marketers and has been verified with the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) and the National Alfalfa Variety Review Board (NAVRB).



Those who prefer an electronic version can try NAFA's searchable, online *Alfalfa Variety Ratings* database where they can make the process of narrowing alfalfa varietal choices even easier. Available at alfalfa.org/varietyratings.php, NAFA's searchable database allows users to search for varieties using up to 23 different parameters like variety name, marketer, fall dormancy, winter survival, disease resistance, and insect resistance. NAFA has made finding the perfect variety as effortless as possible.

NAFA's *Alfalfa Variety Ratings* publication is available in the November issue of Hay & Forage Grower magazine or by visiting NAFA's website at alfalfa.org (low resolution print copies available to download free of charge; hard copies are available for a nominal fee of 50¢).

NAFA's 2018 Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS) – Arden Hills, MN

One of the most successful programs available for training industry professionals about alfalfa growth and management was held at Land O'Lakes Headquarters in Arden Hills, MN, on November 13-14. Sponsored by NAFA, AITS featured topics such as: Alfalfa: Past, Present & Future; Role of Alfalfa in Ruminant Diets; Alfalfa Pests & Pest Management; Mowing & Field Drying; Hay Preservation; Establishment; Alfalfa Seed and Seed Production; and Growth and Development just to name a few. AITS participants were fortunate to hear from some of the leading experts in fields of alfalfa production and management from across the country including: Kim Cassida, *Michigan State University*; Dennis Hancock, *University of Georgia*; Emily Meccage, *Montana State University*; Jim Salfer, *University of Minnesota*; Craig Sheaffer, *University of Minnesota*; Joe Waldo, *Forage Genetics International*; and Nick Wiering, *University of Minnesota*.