



# National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance 2008-09 Annual Report



Alfalfa Seed Field



Alkali Bee Bed



Swathing Alfalfa

## NAFA Summer Tour and Board of Directors Meeting

Pasco, WA, hosted the June 2009 NAFA Summer Tour and Board of Directors Meeting, giving participants an in-depth look at alfalfa seed and forage production in Washington. The event brought together more than 100 producers, industry representatives, and related agency members.

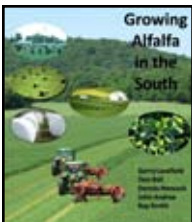
The tour began with a visit to the Touchet area highlighting Mark Wagoner's seed fields, leafcutter bee shelters, and alkali bee beds crucial to alfalfa seed production. Tour participants had the opportunity to take part in the Washington Alfalfa Seed Commission Field Day. Educational presentations featured Jim Barbour, University of Idaho; Doug Walsh, Washington State University; Beth Nelson, NAFA; Rick Boydston, USDA-ARS; John Bircham, RMA; and Linda Murray, EPA.

The tour continued with a swathing demonstration at the Chep Gauntt farm where attendees had the opportunity to test drive various swathers. Equipment manufacturers Case IH, John Deere, MacDon, Massey Ferguson, and New Holland were all on hand to feature and demonstrate their latest machinery.

The evening was capped off with a meeting featuring two individuals on the frontline of the debate over climate change legislation. Robert Bonnie, Senior Advisor to Secretary Vilsack, and Jana Gastellum, Associate Director of the Energy Future Coalition, joined via phone to offer details and perspectives of the legislation, as well as the potential impact it may have on producers.

"One of the most important benefits these tours offer is to give NAFA board members a glimpse of the alfalfa production practices in different areas of the country," said Beth Nelson, NAFA President. "Seeing how these operations work, with all their management considerations, has really been impressive." NAFA members are encouraged to take part in board meetings, tours, and events; check the NAFA homepage for upcoming events at [www.alfalfa-forage.org](http://www.alfalfa-forage.org).

## EDUCATION



### Growing Alfalfa in the South Publication

Formerly known as *Alfalfa in the South*, this publication was out of print and has now been updated by a team of forage specialists led by Dr. Garry Lacefield, University of Kentucky. The publication features requirements for successful production (i.e., site selection, variety selection, inoculation, weed control during establishment, seeding in tilled seedbeds, no-till seeding, fertilizing established stands, weed, insect, and disease control), management factors affecting quality of harvested and stored forage, and economic information. The new publication is available for purchase or free download on the NAFA website [www.alfalfa-forage.org](http://www.alfalfa-forage.org).

### Variety Leaflet

NAFA continues to publish its listing of the winter survival, fall dormancy, and pest resistance ratings of alfalfa varieties eligible for certification by seed certifying agencies. The leaflet is a valuable resource for alfalfa producers looking for information on the varieties which may perform well in their particular region. It contains information on 225 alfalfa varieties from 43 companies. The Variety Leaflet is available for purchase or free download on the NAFA website [www.alfalfa-forage.org](http://www.alfalfa-forage.org)



### AITs - Reno, NV

The always popular Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITs) was held November 11-13, 2008, at the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno, NV. The 2008 edition of NAFA's AITs featured the latest information with regard to alfalfa genetics, varieties, seed production, growth and development, soils, fertility, nitrogen fixation, stress, and overwintering, just to name a few of the many topics covered. The seminar provided training for seed dealers, sales staff, consultants, producers, and those who simply wanted to improve their overall knowledge of alfalfa. The impressive, nationally renowned list of speakers included Dr. Garry Lacefield, University of Kentucky; Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Neal Martin, U.S.D.A. Dairy Forage Research Center; Dr. Glenn Shewmaker, University of Idaho; and Dr. Dan Putnam, University of California.

## NAFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair

**Ron Platt**- Class 1  
ID Alfalfa & Clover Seed Comm.

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**Dave Miller**- Class 2  
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**Dan Undersander** - Ex-Officio  
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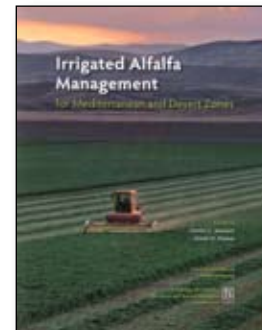
## MISSION STATEMENT

*To ensure the ability of all segments of the alfalfa and forage industry to compete effectively and profitably, domestically and abroad. 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 (continued)

### Irrigated Alfalfa Management for Mediterranean and Desert Zones

NAFA is proud to be a platinum sponsor of Irrigated Alfalfa Management for Mediterranean and Desert Zones, an important educational project that was published in November 2008. The purpose of this publication is to provide detailed, comprehensive, scientifically-accurate information about the growth, production, management, and use of alfalfa grown under irrigation, particularly as appropriate for the Mediterranean and desert zones of California. This publication is a product of the University of California Alfalfa and Forage Systems Workgroup and was edited by Charles Summers and Dan Putnam (NAFA Ex-Officio board member). This publication is available for purchase on the NAFA website [www.alfalfa-forage.org](http://www.alfalfa-forage.org).



## POLICY INITIATIVES

### BIOENERGY

#### Infocast's Cellulosic Ethanol Summit - Coral Gables, Florida

In November 2008, NAFA joined with others including the National Association of Wheat Growers, the National Sorghum Producers, Clean Fuels Development Coalition, the National Corn Growers Association, and others to sponsor Infocast's Cellulosic Ethanol Summit. Attendees visited NAFA's booth to learn more about the organization and the potential alfalfa holds as a feedstock for cellulosic ethanol production. In addition to continuing to garner attention for alfalfa in this arena, it served as an opportunity for NAFA to raise its visibility as a national association.

### BIOTECHNOLOGY

#### APHIS

NAFA continued to work closely with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) as it works toward the completion of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) of Roundup Ready® alfalfa (RRA). In April 2009, NAFA corresponded with Secretary Vilsack on the issue urging the swift completion of the process and stating in clear terms the importance of a rapid conclusion to the alfalfa and forage industry. Additionally, NAFA emphasized a need for a definitive timeline and greater transparency throughout this process.

#### Coexistence Strategy Implementation

In accordance with the Best Management Practices (BMP) for Roundup Ready® Alfalfa Seed Production adopted by NAFA in 2008, a team of state certification agency managers conducted a review of trait stewardship to determine if the NAFA BMP can work on a commercial scale (this review did not represent the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies).

A summary of the review indicated the NAFA BMP seem to be working on a commercial scale. Should RRA be deregulated, it is recommended that the third party review process be continued. In the future this review may lead to the ability to certify a GMO Sensitive Market Protocol.

### FARM BILL

#### CSP-Supplemental Payments for Resource-Conserving Crop Rotations

Due to the persistence of NAFA in raising awareness in Congress of alfalfa's environmental benefits, the 2008 Farm Bill included a new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with supplemental payments to producers agreeing to adopt "resource-conserving crop rotations." Subsequently, NAFA contacted each state's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to ensure that alfalfa received strong consideration as one of the crops identified as "resource-conserving" within their respective states. NAFA was successful as alfalfa qualifies for the supplemental payment in all but six states (AK, FL, GA, MS, SC, WV).

## NAFA RAISES AWARENESS IN D.C.

A contingent of NAFA representatives visited the nation's capital in March 2009 to meet with Congressional staff and USDA representatives regarding a wide range of issues related to the alfalfa and forage industry. The contingent included Mark Wagoner, NAFA Director; Beth Nelson, NAFA President; and Jerry Clark, UW-Extension.

The group worked on various NAFA initiatives focusing on: Alfalfa & Forage Research Program, Logan Bee Lab, Western ARS Dairy/Forage Positions, CSP Resource-Conserving Crop Rotations, and Lygus Bug Grant Funding. The group also visited with EPA's Linda Murray and USDA's Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

## RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY

### Pilot Alfalfa Seed Crop Insurance Program

Although the pilot crop insurance program for alfalfa seed has been approved for permanent status pending available resources, there are items which still need to be addressed to make the program most productive and cost efficient for seed producers. NAFA is working with seed growers and industry representatives in collaboration with the Risk Management Agency to address these areas of concern while still in the pilot phase.

## SUSTAINABLE AG TASK FORCE

NAFA continues to work with the Sustainable Agriculture Task Force which is working to ensure that a national standard for sustainable agriculture, spearheaded by the Leonardo Academy for the American National Standards Institute, fairly represents the interests of U.S. agriculture. The Leonardo Academy, an ANSI accredited standards developer, is providing process administration of the draft standard which includes the creation of a Standards Committee comprised of stakeholders to provide guidance and feedback throughout the standard setting process. Concerns regarding the content and direction of the standard setting process prompted NAFA to join the task force and closely monitor the situation.

## RESEARCH

### Alfalfa & Forage Research Program

NAFA was successful in securing language in the 2008 Farm Bill which authorizes the Alfalfa and Forage Research Program (AFRP) to study issues which include, but are not limited to, yield, persistence, pests, bioenergy potential, and harvest systems. NAFA's task is to concentrate on working with ag appropriators, administration, and agency officials to secure funding for the program.



Dr. Edward Knipling  
ARS Administrator

### ARS - U.S. Dairy Forage Center Western Positions

NAFA has been working with ARS to establish enhanced forage research in the West to work in collaboration with the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center located in Madison, Wisconsin, on issues such as water use efficiency, irrigation management of alfalfa and forage crops, mitigation of water quality problems, and genetic improvement of alfalfa for irrigated regions.

"ARS has long recognized the importance of alfalfa in American agriculture and we have supported a significant national research program to improve the quality, production and utilization of alfalfa. We are committed to maintaining our alfalfa research effort and expanding it as opportunities permit to help the industry meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century including climate change, bioenergy development, increased pressure on water resources, and growing

demand for safe, high-quality food and feed," said Knipling. "To help alfalfa producers respond to these changing conditions there is a proposed reallocation of \$317,000 in the President's FY 2010 budget to expand ARS' alfalfa research capacity. We will use this funding, if provided, to add staff as a first step in building a new ARS research team in the western States directed at irrigation-based alfalfa production systems." Dr. Knipling indicated that this research will focus on evaluating promising alfalfa germplasm and breeding lines for tolerance to salinity, sodicity, and pests and resilience to changing climate conditions. This information will then be used to develop alfalfa varieties better adapted to using degraded ground water and recycled waters and having increased water-use efficiency. "We will continue to seek new funding to add additional positions until we have a fully staffed interdisciplinary team in place that will work closely with the region's producers and our university partners to help meet the alfalfa industry's needs."

## 2008-2009 MEMBERS/SPONSORS

### \$20,000+

Cal/West Seeds  
Forage Genetics International  
Pioneer Hi-Bred International

### \$10,000 - \$19,999

America's Alfalfa  
CA Alfalfa Seed Prod. Research Brd.  
CROPLAN GENETICS®  
Hay and Forage Grower  
ID Alfalfa & Clover Seed Comm.  
Syngenta Seeds NK Brand  
WA Alfalfa Seed Commission  
W-L Research

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

Allied Seed  
Intertape Polymer Group  
John Deere  
New Holland  
Producer's Choice  
Western Ag Enterprises  
WY Alfalfa Seed Council

### \$1,500 - \$4,999

Midwest Forage Association  
MT Alfalfa Seed Committee  
NV Alfalfa Seed Commission  
WA State Hay Growers Assoc.

### \$500 - \$1,499

CA Alfalfa & Forage Association  
CelPril  
Colorado Hay & Forage Assoc.  
CT&T Enterprises  
DJ and R  
FMC  
Harvest Tec  
ID Hay & Forage Association  
NE Alfalfa Marketing Association  
San Joaquin Valley Hay Growers Assoc.  
Oregon Hay & Forage Assoc.

## NAFA STAFF

**Beth Nelson**  
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**Rod Christensen\***

Executive Secretary

**Jon Dockett**

Associate Director

**Shane Johnson\***

Education Director

**Jenna Knoblauch**

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**Chelsea Nelson**

Event Coordinator

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Publications Director

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## Prosser Funding Request

NAFA endorsed an effort with other Northwest agricultural groups to increase funding at the ARS Station in Prosser, WA. The focus of this request was to ensure adequate funding to facilitate continuation of critical research support to all stakeholders. As a result of this effort, the Ag Appropriations Committee authorized funding for “Forage Crop Stress Tolerance and Virus Disease Management” in the amount of \$200,000. NAFA thanks Senator Murray and Congressman Hastings for securing this funding.

## Lygus Bug Initiative

In August 2008, NAFA hosted the Strategy Meeting for Lygus Bug Initiative for PNW and California. Lygus bug is a significant economic pest pressure in the Pacific Northwest and California for alfalfa seed, conifer seedling, dry peas and lentils, strawberries, and vegetable seed. The purpose of this new multi-crop initiative was to identify a long-term integrated pest management strategy that would develop and deliver science-based information and technologies to reduce Lygus bug pest pressure and severity for these crops. The largest, and in some cases the only, geographic growing area in the U.S. for these crops is the PNW states and California. This strategy meeting served as the foundation for this new collaborative, cross-crop approach.

In support of this effort, NAFA Director Mark Wagoner and NAFA President Beth Nelson met with several CSREES representatives to discuss strategies for securing funding for these activities. While the initial proposal did not receive funding, the team of researchers led by Doug Walsh, Washington State University, plan to revise and resubmit the grant application.

## Logan Bee Lab Request

NAFA requested continued support from agricultural appropriators for the Pollinating Insects – Biology, Management, and Systematics Research Unit (PIRU), of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service in Logan, UT. The appropriation increase will provide funds to improve current management systems for bees critical to alfalfa production including, leafcutting bees, bumble bees, and blue orchard bees. Managed bees are vital to alfalfa and alfalfa seed production. These funds will be used to improve the health and availability of these valuable pollinators.

## Pollinator Legislation

NAFA worked with the offices of Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Tom Harkin in support of the Pollinator Protection Act. Originally introduced as a stand-alone bill, the Pollinator Protection Act was later rolled into the 2008 Farm Bill. NAFA will continue to work with Congressional offices and USDA to direct a portion of this funding to the Logan Bee Lab which will focus on pollinators essential to alfalfa seed production.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS

## State & Regional Meetings

Having the opportunity to meet producers and industry members is an effective way to broaden industry awareness of NAFA initiatives and to seek input for the future direction of NAFA. During 2008-2009, NAFA participated in the following meetings:

December 2-4	California Alfalfa & Forge Assn and Western Alfalfa Seed Growers Assn in San Diego, CA
January 15	Idaho Alfalfa & Clover Seed Commission in Caldwell, ID
January 15	Washington State Hay Growers Association in Kennewick, WA
January 27	Midwest Forage Association in Wisconsin Dells, WI
January 28-29	Colorado Hay & Forage Association and Colorado Farm Show in Greeley, CO
February 4	Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Council in Powell, WY
February 5	Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee in Billings, MT
February 9-13	Midwest Forage Association in Lamberton/Floodwood/Detroit Lakes/Royalton/Rochester, MN

## Hay & Forage Grower Magazine

NAFA has designated Hay & Forage Grower magazine as its official publication. A column is featured four times a year with news relating to current NAFA initiatives and interviews with national policymakers. Feature interviews included: Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer, House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

Visit the NAFA website to view the archived articles - [www.alfalfa-forage.org](http://www.alfalfa-forage.org)



Secretary Ed Schafer



Congressman Collin Peterson



Secretary Tom Vilsack