NAFA...Growing Results

Alfalfa Sprouts Interest in D.C.
In February 2011, NAFA members took to Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress (focusing on House and Senate Agriculture and Agriculture Appropriations Committee members), the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Environmental Protection Agency, and USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, Risk Management Agency, National Institute for Food and Agriculture, and National Agricultural Statistics Service. In total, nearly 100 meetings were scheduled, giving NAFA members ample opportunity to educate Congressional members about the importance of the nation’s 3rd most valuable field crop and the urgency in being recognized in policy and research funding decisions. In addition to congressional visits, NAFA held concurrent House and Senate staff briefings giving staff members a primer on alfalfa and forage. A highlight of the week was NAFA’s “Alfalfa on the Hill: Bluegrass Style” reception which gave members of Congress and their staffs the opportunity to visit informally with NAFA representatives about alfalfa and forage crops. Fly-In participants were pleased with the positive response they received on Capitol Hill. Nearly 50 growers and industry members, representing 29 states, participated in NAFA’s inaugural Fly-In.

NAFA Fosters Coexistence - New & Updated Documents and GOZs
After the deregulation of Roundup Ready® alfalfa, NAFA enhanced its coexistence efforts with two new documents: Coexistence Principles & Glossary of Terms and Greater Opportunity Zones for Seed Production, adopted June 2011. An additional document, Best Management Practices for Adventitious Presence-Sensitive Alfalfa Seed Production, was adopted July 2011. In addition to the new documents, the board approved revisions to the BMP for RRA Alfalfa Seed Production. These documents join NAFA’s previously established coexistence documents which include: Coexistence for Alfalfa Hay Export Markets, Coexistence for Alfalfa Seed Export Markets, and Coexistence for Organic Alfalfa Seed and Hay Markets. Documents are available on the NAFA website - www.alfalfa.org.

NAFA Works with RMA to Allow Written Agreements in Forage Seed Pilot Program
NAFA representatives met with Associate RMA Administrator Barbara Leach and Deputy Administrator Michael Alston in an effort to address concerns with the Forage Seed Pilot Program targeted for approval in 2013. NAFA requested the pilot be expanded to additional states. RMA agreed to modify language in the standard provisions allowing producers to obtain crop insurance through written agreements.

RMA Webinar • new seed policy provisions • archived on NAFA website

Prosser Research Funding
In working with ARS, funding was secured to keep Dr. Per McCord on the alfalfa/forage research team at the USDA-ARS laboratory in Prosser, WA. Dr. McCord has initiated a collaborative project with Pioneer Hi-Bred, Forage Genetics International, Cal/West Seeds, and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, to identify DNA markers for resistance to stem nematode and Verticillium Wilt. In addition, he is working on developing markers for enhanced drought tolerance and/or water use efficiency in alfalfa.